

Commentary

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Arch Puddington

Getting Away With Murder

Walter Berns

Tales of Virtue

James Q. Wilson

Losing China Again

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Who Is Addicted to What?

Midge Decter

Books in Review: Paul Johnson / Rael Jean Isaac /
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Norman Podhoretz

Editor
Neal Kozodoy

Managing Editor: Brenda Brown

Assistant to the Editors: Denise Rosner

Advertising Director: Sarah M. Stern

Circulation Manager: Beth C. Freeman

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Letters from Readers

The Jewish Family

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jack Wertheimer's article, "Family Values & the Jews" [January], is an interesting exercise in nostalgia, but is otherwise totally disconnected from the realities of American Jewish life. Mr. Wertheimer yearns for an earlier era when Jews lived in mostly Jewish urban neighborhoods, Jewish mothers stayed home with their children, and divorce and intermarriage were rare. He bemoans the mobility of Jewish children, who have not hesitated to leave the Northeast in search of occupational opportunity. He decries the sexual behavior of modern Jews, and asserts—without any evidence whatsoever—that the American Jewish community pays no attention to the Jewish family.

Mr. Wertheimer is right about some things. It is true that the state of Jewish education is depressingly inadequate, and he is surely correct that rabbis and religious leaders must not hesitate to emphasize the importance of the family and of responsible sexual behavior. But his vision of the past is a romanticized one, and his prescriptions for the future are woefully naive. He seems to believe that if only rabbis and communal leaders loudly proclaimed their commitment to traditional values, Jewish behavior would change. Much of his article is an attack on "realists" who suggest that something more substantive must be attempted.

Jewish mobility and Jewish working mothers do not result from a rebellion against Jewish values. As the "realists" more correctly note, these phenomena reflect firmly rooted social and economic patterns among the American middle class. Religious leaders, no matter how determined, cannot change these patterns.

At times, Mr. Wertheimer's wishful thinking borders on the downright nasty. He acknowledges that only a third of Jewish households consist of two parents and their children, but then asserts that the remaining two-thirds are fated to remain "at the periphery" of Jewish life, beyond the reach of synagogues and communal groups. He has a bizarre view of Jewish family values if he can so easily consign divorced Jews, single Jews, and

single Jewish parents to permanent peripheral status. He also seems unaware that many Reform synagogues—and Conservative and Orthodox ones, too, for that matter—have been very effective in finding ways to bring Jews with alternative family structures into synagogue life.

In general, Mr. Wertheimer seems to know very little about what is happening in the synagogue world. It is absurd to suggest that little attention is being paid to the Jewish family; in most synagogues, of all streams, Jewish family life is the central focus of concern. For example, in response to the fact that both parents work in many families, Reform synagogues around the country are offering day-care and nursery schools so that their children may be exposed to Jewish caregivers. Such a response seems far more constructive than bemoaning the absence of stay-at-home mothers.

It is also far too early to assert, as Mr. Wertheimer does, that winning the allegiance of the children of intermarried families is a "very long shot." It is a difficult task with undeniable dangers for the synagogue and the Jewish community, but there is much evidence that it can be done if sufficient attention is given to the effort. Here again, many Reform synagogues have developed impressive programs and achieved encouraging results. Similarly, most have succeeded in welcoming a measure of participation by non-Jewish parents who agree to have their children raised as Jews, while retaining clear distinctions and boundaries between Jew and non-Jew.

Jack Wertheimer underestimates the creative response of the American synagogue to the problems he describes. And if refusing to write off intermarried Jews, homosexual Jews, single Jews, and Jews in non-traditional families makes me a "realist," I cheerfully accept the designation, as do many others in the Reform movement; so defined, the term is a badge of honor.

[RABBI] ERIC H. YOFFIE
Vice President, Union of
American Hebrew Congregations
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
Jack Wertheimer points out that every major Jewish organization is



MOSCOW, 1993 (REUTERS)

For Jews in the former Soviet Union, the exit signs are clearly marked.

The signs are all too familiar. Black-shirted fascists march. Synagogues mysteriously go up in flames. Right-wing extremist Vladimir Zhirinovsky rants against Jews and "Zionist plots." And his party wins more votes than any other in Russia.

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concerned about Jewish continuity. We are concerned, also, with intermarriage, the stability of the family, the degree of intensity in American Jewish life, and the efficiency of the American Jewish educational system because all of these have a major impact on the continuity as well as on the quality of Jewish life.

Mr. Wertheimer asserts that the way we ought to address the current complex situation is to put all our financial eggs in the basket of strengthening the traditional Jewish family. He cites the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, so he is undoubtedly aware that only 14 percent of Jewish households contain a Jewish married couple with children. Does he really believe that all of Jewish continuity depends on this minority group? If so, his article will do little good because the situation is already beyond hope! Mr. Wertheimer rightly notes that the family is a critical force in socializing Jews into the Jewish community. What he fails to take into consideration, however, is that most of the families raising Jews today are not traditional Jewish families. If we do not support single parents and homosexual couples raising children, we will simply lose them. That would be cutting off our nose to spite our face.

Furthermore, the Jewish continuity many of us support includes such families because we believe this is the right thing to do. Mr. Wertheimer never demonstrates that such families cannot share our commitment to continuity and act on it. I believe they can if we do not drive them out.

While it can be argued that we should not make a substantial investment in reaching out to uninvolved intermarried couples because it is not cost-effective, I would like to frame the argument more positively. We know that we need to invest in building radiant centers of Jewish life exciting to non-Orthodox Jews, who constitute the vast majority of the Jewish community, which rejects the notion that all of Jewish law comes from God and accepts the notion of personal choice in an open society. . . .

Membership in a traditional Jewish family will be of little use if that family is not educated, motivated, and involved in Jewish living. The challenge for us is to provide that education, motivation,

and opportunity for involvement. We can do that effectively for homosexual Jews, single Jews, married Jews, and those intermarried Jews who genuinely wish to be involved in significantly Jewish living. . . .

Believing the Jewish community could eliminate its problems if only it strengthened the family fails to recognize that the traditional Jewish family is not a bastion of Judaism now. Making it one will require a vastly increased commitment of resources to Jewish education and a much greater commitment to innovation than we have seen in most of the Jewish community. But it is naive to believe that even if we create congregations that genuinely support being part of an involved Jewish family—a goal we certainly should have—we will be able to eliminate the divorce problem in the Jewish community or otherwise radically affect some of the natural problems of living in an open society.

The only cure for these things is living in a kind of isolation that Mr. Wertheimer is no more interested in promoting than I am. But to assume that any of this is caused by a liberal stance on homosexuality, for example, is to fail to understand the nature and circumstances of North American Jewry. The question now is whether we will act justly in reaching out to all Jews who can find a worthwhile place in the Jewish community. Will we invest in continuity to the extent necessary to create first-rate educational and religious and cultural programming? And will we work together across dividing lines of organization and ideology to tackle these problems in a serious way? . . . The Reconstructionist movement has taken major strides in this area, and seeks the partnership of like-minded Jews and the cooperation of a broad coalition of Jewish organizations.

Teaching Jewish values in a way that encourages Jews to make their own choices; organizing Jews to take action on social-justice issues under Jewish auspices; providing aid for Jews in times of personal crisis; building within synagogues support networks that help people get reinforcement for being part of any kind of Jewish family; and providing sophisticated opportunities for adult education—all these are critical aspects of creating a vital liberal Jewish community and

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM

A Statement of the National Association of Scholars

Sexual harassment is always contemptible. Because it also subverts education, it is particularly damaging in an academic setting.

The National Association of Scholars believes that college and university authorities should respond to instances of sexual harassment promptly and firmly. Tenure does not protect faculty members found guilty of coercing sexual favors. Nor is academic freedom an impediment to the effective enforcement of prohibitions against lesser forms of harassment, such as inappropriate touching, that also exploit individuals and undermine the educational process. Such behavior constitutes a serious violation of an educator's responsibilities and is morally wrong. It cannot be tolerated.

However, academic freedom and the rights of individuals can be—and have been—violated by misguided efforts to combat sexual harassment. Too many institutions have adopted vague definitions of harassment that may all too easily be applied to attitudes or even to a scholar's professional views. Not surprisingly, a chill has descended on academic discussions of sensitive but legitimate topics, such as human sexuality, sex differences, and sexual roles. Worse, procedures have been widely adopted that violate the canons of due process. In a number of cases, the reputations and careers of innocent persons have been severely damaged as a result of unwarranted actions taken by college and university authorities.

Specifically:

- The criteria for identifying "harassment" are often nebulous, allowing for expansive interpretations of its meaning. For example, at one major public university, the official definition stated that "Sexual harassment can be as blatant as a rape or as subtle as a look. Harassment...often consists of a callous insensitivity to the experience of women"; in another official publication the university further advised that sexual harassment "is broadly defined to include behavior that may not be considered overtly sexual." Language like this can only breed confusion, resentment, and injustice.
- When definitions of sexual harassment are expanded to include opinions and attitudes, academic freedom is violated. Such definitions have already significantly inhibited discussion inside and outside the classroom. Ambiguous phrases like "callous insensitivity to the experience of women" have inspired complaints against professors accused of slighting gender-based literary analysis, or who have discussed theories and findings, such as Freud's, that run counter to the prevailing consensus about sexual differences.
- Some definitions of sexual harassment embrace a wholly subjective test of its occurrence—for example, the complainant having been made to "feel uncomfortable." Proof relies not on the objective behavior of the alleged harasser but on how one person perceived that behavior.
- Charges of sexual harassment are sometimes entertained long after the alleged offense, when the memories of the parties have faded, their motives have altered, and evidence has been lost.
- Mid-level administrators with meager academic experience but a strong commitment to fashionable causes are frequently accorded a major role in drawing up harassment regulations, interpreting them, counseling complainants, investigating charges, administering hearings, and determining guilt and penalties. Sometimes one and the same person performs all of these functions and, in addition, encourages students and others to make harassment charges. This leads to violations of academic due process.
- Investigations of alleged sexual harassment can provide a pretext for engaging in the ideological persecution of persons whose views are out of favor. When amorphous harassment regulations are enforced over-zealously, they encourage frivolous or self-serving charges from discontented or vindictive individuals.
- Collective penalties have been imposed on entire academic departments and groups of students for the actions, not always proven, of a few individuals. At one prestigious private university, every student, faculty member, and staff member was ordered to attend a three-hour seminar on sexual harassment because a federal agency found fault with the university's judgment in a case involving a single alleged harasser. It need hardly be said that finding persons guilty by association, or making a whole category responsible for actions only committed by one or a few, violates the principle of individual responsibility basic to our society. It is likely to arouse resistance against efforts to combat genuine sexual harassment.
- Some of the sanctions now in force aim at thought reform, frequently through compulsory "sensitivity training" programs. These programs often operate to humiliate those suspected of holding "incorrect views." They also frequently suggest that being white, male, or heterosexual constitutes a presumption of guilt. When required for faculty or students, these programs constitute an assault on individual dignity and freedom.

What we are witnessing, in short, is the transformation of a clear behavioral offense into a ubiquitous "thought crime" and the substitution of psychological manipulation for rational discussion. The resulting confusion of genuine harassment with less serious acts, and even with beliefs, brings anti-harassment policy into needless conflict with academic freedom. This confusion is bound to diminish the opprobrium that rightly attaches to sexual harassment. In the interest of protecting students and staff from genuine harassment and of preserving academic freedom, the NAS urges institutions of higher education to:

- define sexual harassment precisely, confining it to individual behavior that is manifestly sexual and that clearly violates the rights of others
- set a reasonable statute of limitations on bringing sexual harassment charges
- separate the offices of investigator, prosecutor, judge, and jury; observe the requirements of due process; and ensure the right of the accused to make an adequate defense
- punish those who knowingly lodge false accusations of harassment, and
- act against proven harassers forcefully, by dismissal if necessary, instead of coercing opinions and restricting speech

Anything less fails to protect students, faculty, and staff from sexual harassment. Anything more threatens individual freedoms and, most conspicuously, academic freedom.

For additional information about the NAS and its activities, including its research center, speakers bureau, search service, newsletter, state and regional affiliates, conferences, local events, and the quarterly *Academic Questions*, write to the National Association of Scholars, 575 Ewing Street, Princeton, New Jersey 08540, or call 609-683-7878.

Jews who are loyal to it. We do need passionate commitment, but liberals who believe that Judaism can incorporate liberal values and speak to the issues of our time are able to express as much passion as anyone else in the Jewish community. Certainly, we have a vision of Judaism that is as true to our ancient sources as any other. And we stand up for what we believe in. Doing more of that might well attract Jews who go elsewhere now for religious and political activity because they do not find the vigor, spiritual depth, and moral strength they seek in much of organized Jewish life.

[RABBI] DAVID A. TEUTSCH
President, Reconstructionist
Rabbinical College
Wyncote, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Kudos to my teacher, Jack Wertheimer, for "Family Values & the Jews." We who work in the Jewish community are distressed by evidence such as that detailed in the 1990 Jewish Population Study indicating that Jewish continuity is in doubt. As a rabbi and as a traditional Jew, I share Mr. Wertheimer's concern that in the name of "realism" and "pluralism," and by extension "cultural liberalism," there is a reluctance on the part of many Jews to define what Judaism is and what our community standards ought to be. Many committed Conservative Jews complain, with some justification, that they are not certain what their own movement stands for. How much more so for the great numbers of Jews, even affiliated synagogue members, who do not know what their temples and synagogues stand for, or who do not abide by those precepts.

Yet Mr. Wertheimer's perspective is limited because, despite his considerable knowledge of American Jewry derived from his extensive research and exposure to the community, he does not work in its confines. I for one wonder if it is correct to say, as he does regarding rabbinic organizations, that "most either feel powerless to influence Jews at large or seem fearful of saying anything that might drive away the minority who actually join their synagogues," and "instead of acting as interpreters and teachers of a normative tradition, they have recast themselves as therapists to a dysfunctional family."

It is easy to blame the rabbis for what is a much larger problem, namely, that while the legacy of progressive America has been a plethora of organizations and flow charts, traditional cultural assumptions and behaviors have succumbed to mass consumer culture and its attendant behaviors. Those of us who are traditional Jews, including Mr. Wertheimer, have to contend constantly with the tension between a Jewish approach to reality and a secular life-style. Most Jews lack a Jewish approach, and merely exhorting them to try one . . . will not work; they need to be brought into the tent before they can be taught what Judaism has to say. And bringing them, programming for their needs, means meeting them halfway; it means understanding who they are and the contexts of their lives.

It is necessary, but not sufficient, to pose Judaism as a counter-cultural force to much of modern culture. Yet it is naive to think that such valid cultural criticisms can be divorced from concerns of political economy, which are themselves the cause of much of what the "family-values" critics decry. It is true that American Jews are mainly better Americans than Jews, but that is part of the blessing and the burden of American life. To assert that Jewish leadership is responsible for this lamentable state of affairs is to minimize the depth of the problem, and to miss a significant part of the solution, which is the need to try all kinds of experimental attempts, in areas like marketing and demographics, to devise a strategy for reaching the Jewish family. . . .

In conclusion, to paraphrase a Yiddish phrase, "As the Gentiles go, so go the Jews." As America ascended, so too did American Jews, at least in material terms. By contrast, Judaism has been less successful in dealing with the affluence of its adherents. Eighty years ago, Louis D. Brandeis told his fellow American Jews, "To be good Americans, we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists." American Jews reached Brandeis's aim of becoming good Americans, but the problem is that America has changed, and, consequently, so have we. Brandeis's formula, and goal, now requires revision: to be good Jews, we must be better Americans, and to be better Americans, we must at least be aware of the structure of

American life. To focus merely on altering "culture" and "values" is to obscure the problematic nature of America itself: an environment that allowed Jews to acculturate and to integrate, with the result that our fate is inextricably linked with the fate of America.

[RABBI] DAVID B. STARR
Great Neck, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The problems Jack Wertheimer outlines are real, while his solutions are unrealistic. To suggest that a society which is exhibiting signs of anarchy needs more order is obvious. The question is, how to achieve it?

Today we are seeing a transformation in how the synagogue is utilized by the American Jew. As Gary Tobin, director of Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, suggests: "The synagogue is viewed as a service to the individual rather than a communal obligation."

As rabbis and leaders we cannot expect that by preaching family stability and being pro-life we are going to get the message across that Judaism is . . . about "matters of life and death." Making blanket statements about single-family households and homosexuals, sexuality in general, and the needs of children specifically will only serve to drive our people away.

The role of leader in the Jewish community has traditionally been held to be that of *posek*, a scholar/rabbi capable of rendering legal decisions for a particular community at a particular time. This office was sometimes able to suspend law or impose stricter adherence to law based on the given circumstances of the day. It was the role of the *posek* to determine whether or not to impose certain standards on a community. . . . Today, . . . for a whole host of reasons, economics not the least of them, the rabbi must function in many capacities. He must and should be a counselor, but he must also refer his congregants when that is warranted. The rabbi must not simply push one agenda but keep his finger on the pulse of every individual family and the life of the community as well. It is not, nor has it ever been, the role of the rabbi to stigmatize a certain population or encourage a truly dangerous marriage to continue. Our tradition has always had a great deal to say about

the well-being of the individual.

The fact of the matter is that, as the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported on December 17, 1993, "Four out of five Jews belong to synagogues at some point in their lives." We need to make those experiences as positive and inclusive as we possibly can. As Jerome Epstein, executive vice president of United Synagogue of America, has said: "Synagogues must look at several targets in terms of market segmentation. . . . You can't reach each constituency as one group. The goal has to be to address each group."

It might be nice to live in a ghetto, where our children would never meet a non-Jew; where we could set our children up in marriages when they were young enough to reproduce in great numbers and stay in those marriages until they die; and where we would be in a world in which *halakhah* could be coerced. But I am not sure that that is possible or desirable.

As Rabbi Simon Greenberg once said: "I cannot recall any historically significant Jewish community that disappeared solely because of inner decay." We, as leaders of the American Jewish community, will maintain a strong Jewish community by our sensitivity to the changing models that our country has put forth. That is our job.

[RABBI] JAY M. STEIN
North Suburban Synagogue
Beth El
Highland Park, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As an Episcopalian, I empathize with Jack Wertheimer. Because of an ever-growing number drifting away and a desire for inclusiveness, congregations today are unwilling to define norms. . . .

At its best, Anglicanism, with a common liturgy but not a common theology, is open to divergent views. However, Stephen Neill, the author of *Anglicanism and Christian Faith and Other Faiths*, reminds Episcopalians that such openness imposes great responsibility on the individual, which is not for everyone, particularly in today's anti-intellectual atmosphere. . . .

Mr. Wertheimer . . . describes the Orthodox, Reconstructionist, and Reform viewpoints in a way I consider fair (a similar spectrum of ideas is found in the Episcopal church). He disparages none, and, what is significant, he is

knowledgeable about all the viewpoints considered. . . .

If a society is to survive, it needs a core of respected, defined values. . . . But this should be, as Mr. Wertheimer reminds us, a core with compelling transcendence, which is most often found embedded in our ancient traditions, paradoxically now excluded from most schools and trivialized in the mass media.

DOUGLAS H. SCHEWE
Madison, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It is not important whether I agree or disagree with every word in Jack Wertheimer's excellent article. What is important is that both he and COMMENTARY had the courage and honesty to describe the crisis of the American Jewish family as an integral factor of the crisis of the abandonment of traditional Jewish values by the Jewish establishment. Most distressing is the extent to which the Reform and Conservative movements have capitulated to the secular/radical American viewpoint on all issues relating to the family. Not only is this a betrayal of their Jewish roots to their own detriment, and to the

detriment of the families affiliated with their movements, it constantly raises questions from the very people they serve concerning the depth of their commitment to Jewish tradition and continuity. The escalating Christianization of the Reform movement, the unwillingness of Reform rabbis to speak out against intermarriage, and the inability of a Reform rabbi who refuses to perform intermarriages to obtain a pulpit are but facets of this phenomenon.

Most troubling is that this article and similar articles and studies notwithstanding, the best we will be treated to is a flood of self-righteous justification, and little in the way of introspection, self-criticism, regret, or calls to reevaluate present direction and policy. An emperor who does not know that he has no clothes is an emperor who will soon discover that he has no empire, either.

[RABBI] PINCHAS STOLPER
Executive Vice President
Orthodox Union
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

During our eighteen years of marriage, my wife and I have sung



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the same lament that Jack Wertheimer does in "Family Values & the Jews." Searching for a congregation led by a rabbi who discusses the relevance of Judaism's rich tradition to contemporary family issues turned us into "temple hoppers." We even joined an Orthodox congregation, but the rabbi was only a slight improvement over his Conservative colleagues.

Given our frustrations, particularly with our congregation's last rabbi (an undergraduate journalism major who sounded as if he were writing for the *New York Times* editorial page), I accepted the chairmanship of the search committee for a new rabbi. The view from there did not provide much encouragement.

In letters, telephone conversations, and personal interviews, I communicated with over 25 rabbis. The majority were relatively recent graduates of the [Conservative] Jewish Theological Seminary, though several had more than ten years' experience in the rabbinate. With the exception of the rabbi we selected, not one of the candidates raised any of the issues mentioned by Mr. Wertheimer. Few seemed concerned with *any* Jewish issues. I often felt that I could have been conducting a search for a minister of a mainstream Protestant church.

I am hopeful that our new rabbi not only takes Jewish tenets seriously, but actually believes in them. The rabbi has commissioned the ritual committee to discuss and formulate a policy on intermarried couples. So far, in conversations and sermons, this rabbi appears not to fear, in Mr. Wertheimer's phrase, "to express the belief that the Jewish family must remain . . . Jewish."

My story ends with what some would consider an ironic twist: our new rabbi, who may be the increasingly rare Jewish leader concerned with and committed to traditional Jewish family values—is a woman.

PAUL ZISSERSON
Cranston, Rhode Island

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I agree with so much of what Jack Wertheimer has to say about the reluctance of the Jewish community to articulate its valuable tradition of "family values" forthrightly that I hesitate to focus on an area of disagreement.

Mr. Wertheimer believes that the "realists" who advocate reach-

ing out to the intermarried have "undermined" the Jewish community's efforts to reach inward to the core Jews who can be educated to continue the tradition. In some respects, of course, he is correct. When efforts aimed at the intermarried serve to make the couple feel better about their intermarriage or help them develop ways to function as a dual-faith family, those efforts certainly do undermine Jewish continuity. However, Mr. Wertheimer's seeming prescription has its own drawbacks. As he himself notes, about a quarter of the children who are raised as Jews have parents who are intermarried. There are, in addition, hundreds of thousands of children with one Jewish parent who are not being raised as Jews. Are such children, and their parents, to be abandoned in an effort to focus only on the people who are not seen as such a "long shot" to continue as Jews?

There is an excluded middle position. The Jewish community can seek to reach the intermarried, not to provide marital or family therapy, but to welcome them into the Jewish community with the specific goals of effecting the conversion of the Gentile partner and the raising of the children as Jewish. Such specific goals allow the Jewish community to maintain contact with all Jews so they are not abandoned. At the same time, these goals do not surrender to the lure of accepting anyone for any reason without having the person embrace Jewish values. Such an approach invites and allows the intermarried to come to Judaism rather than having Judaism come to the intermarried.

A welcoming attitude toward the intermarried and their children should not be seen as antithetical to attracting born Jews back to Judaism or providing for Jewish continuity among those who are actively Jewish. Consider a commercial metaphor. A manufacturer wishes to sell a product; he advertises it for two reasons: to attract new customers and also to assure current customers that they have made the right choice in continuing to purchase the product. In the case of American Jewry, where all Jews must keep choosing to affiliate, seeking new Jews from among the intermarried not only increases our numbers, not only keeps more families and children Jewish, but sends a message to the

already affiliated that they have chosen correctly when they continue adhering to a tradition others find so enriching that they are willing to join it.

Such an approach provides a wide and sure road to Jewish continuity.

LAWRENCE J. EPSTEIN
Stony Brook, New York

JACK WERTHEIMER writes:

All my correspondents agree that the Jewish family has undergone massive transformation and dislocation in recent decades. Those who write in a critical vein take exception to the course of action I prescribe either because it is "naïve" or because it will result in "driving away" or "writing off" vast populations.

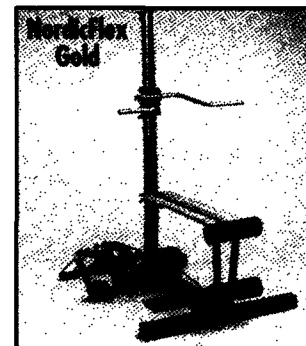
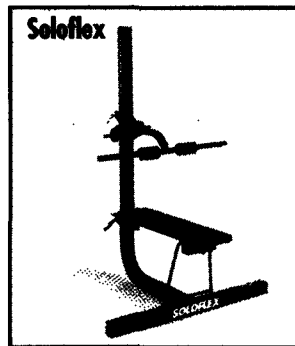
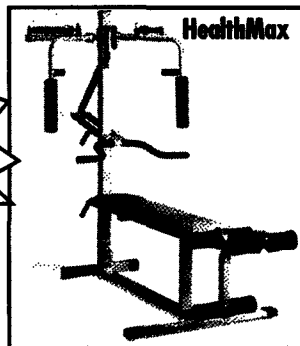
To begin with the latter issue, Eric H. Yoffie, in his eagerness to ridicule my position, imagines that I "consign divorced Jews, single Jews, and single Jewish parents to permanent peripheral status." In fact, my words were different: I stated that such individuals "*may*" remain at the periphery despite our best intentions. As the spokesman for a large union of synagogues, Rabbi Yoffie may wish to consider who it is that pays the salaries of his colleagues serving in pulpits and supports the congregations in his Union of American Hebrew Congregations—the alternative families or the traditional Jewish nuclear families? David A. Teutsch touches directly on this question when he takes note of the recent finding that "only 14 percent of Jewish households contain a Jewish married couple with children," and then asks whether Jewish continuity depends on this minority group. The sobering answer, of course, is affirmative. The preponderance of communal finances, voluntarism, and Jewish offspring is provided by this shrinking population, along with an older generation of Jews whose children no longer live at home. The Reconstructionist movement may have done well for itself by targeting Jews in alternative family structures, but what works for a segment comprising only 1 percent of the American Jewish population will not ensure the viability of the larger Jewish communal enterprise.

Rabbi Teutsch fears that my approach will "drive out" Jews living in nontraditional families. Since I nowhere advocate driving

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anyone away, I can only conclude that to assert any normative position on Jewish family life will, in the view of Rabbi Teutsch, drive away those Jews who disagree with the stated norm. To accede to such fears is to abdicate responsibility. Rabbi Teutsch is very much in sync with advocates of a currently fashionable pluralism that denies society the right to judge what is right or good, lest such judgments cause offense to some. (Interestingly, he voices no similar reservations about "organizing Jews to take action on social-justice issues"—even though many Jews would take exception to his application of Jewish teachings to current social circumstances.) Since Jewish teachings are not neutral on family matters, how can we hope to rebuild a strong and authentic Jewish community by censoring our own traditions? Moreover, why assume that it is impossible to speak of Jewish ideals while simultaneously treating human beings in all their complexity with respect? Has Rabbi Teutsch never met a Jew living in an alternative family structure—a Jew who has never married, a single Jewish par-

ent, a homosexual Jew, an intermarried Jew—who views his or her own life's choices as less than the ideal for the larger Jewish community? I have.

As a social historian, I am amused that several of my rabbinic correspondents chastise me for ignoring the power of social and economic forces. But as a Jewish layman, I am distressed that these rabbis are so willing to capitulate to these "forces" without offering a response. Do these spiritual leaders have so little confidence in the role of ideas and beliefs in the shaping of human behavior?

A generation ago, rabbis proudly extolled the virtues of Jewish family life, claiming in countless sermons that Jews were the envy of their neighbors because of the stability and sobriety of their families. Today, there is virtually universal agreement that something has gone terribly awry, but the most some rabbis wish to offer are meliorative programs to repair damage: some design programs to make synagogues more hospitable to single Jews *after* they have chosen not to marry or not to remain married; others devise pro-

grams to send teenagers to Israel *after* they have completed a Jewish education which has left them Judaically illiterate; and others labor to reach offspring of interfaith families *after* their parents have decided to raise children in such confusing circumstances. Is it too much to expect of rabbis that they express their evaluation of these trends and thereby give guidance to their congregants? Contrary to David B. Starr, I am not so foolish as to "blame the rabbis for what is a much larger problem." But I do criticize Rabbi Starr and those of his colleagues who merely accept that "as the Gentiles go, so go the Jews." Were that simplistic aphorism always correct, the Jews would have disappeared a long time ago.

Rabbi Starr recognizes this when he raises what I regard as the most important issue in the discussion of Jewish continuity: "the tension between a Jewish approach to reality and a secular life-style." The catastrophic demographic patterns traced by most recent studies require the Jewish community to rethink its posture vis-à-vis that secular life-style. Unlike Jay M. Stein, I feel it insufficient for rabbis merely to show "sensitivity to the changing models that our country has put forth." Rabbis and other Jewish leaders need to articulate a Jewish response to those models, particularly when they conflict with Jewish teachings and are inimical to the Jewish community.

Moreover, Jewish leaders need to question which sector of America is putting forth those models. The demographer Barry Kosmin has noted astutely that American Jews "have been assimilated into a mythical . . . America that is only inhabited by a few Episcopalians and Unitarians." (Douglas H. Schewe's letter suggests that at least some Episcopalians are rethinking matters as well.) Perhaps those Jewish leaders who so pride themselves on their realism should rethink the wisdom of their embrace of this fanciful America and begin to reach out to the sectors of American society that offer a vision that is more congruent with Jewish family and religious values.

I appreciate Pinchas Stolper's compliments, but I believe he errs when he sweepingly dismisses all Conservative and Reform rabbis. Notwithstanding the Pollyannaish letters of some of my other correspondents, I am convinced that a

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great many rabbis across the religious spectrum agree with my position. More than any other communal leaders, they are confronted daily with the casualties of dysfunctional Jewish families. I hope my article will encourage rabbis to express what they know to be true.

It is noteworthy that my article did not elicit any responses from either professionals or volunteers in positions of leadership within the nondenominational sector of American Jewry. Undoubtedly, these leaders tread a fine line, but they cannot hope to ensure Jewish continuity without confronting family issues. A helpful model for such organizations is offered by the American Jewish Committee's William Petschek National Jewish Family Center, which has courageously created a forum for exploring Jewish family matters despite the potentially explosive nature of such discussions.

I thank the readers who have written letters of encouragement. It does not surprise me, *pace* Paul Zisseron, that a woman rabbi is committed to traditional Jewish family values. Lawrence J. Epstein defines a position regarding intermarried families that is close to my own.

Using Force

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Any discussion of "When, Where & How to Use Force," like the three articles published under this overall heading in the December 1993 issue ["Beyond Self-Defense," by Joshua Muravchik; "The Core vs. the Periphery," by Fareed Zakaria; and "Learning from Aidid," by A.J. Bacevich], will be academic unless we maintain a strong national defense that will enable us to make these decisions. With this in mind, it is time we drew an analogy between our national defenses and the biological defenses of our organisms: our immune systems.

No one in his right mind would willingly, knowingly, and voluntarily diminish his own immune system. We are now far enough advanced in our medical knowledge to understand that when our immune systems are compromised, all kinds of opportunistic diseases can afflict us. If we allow our national defense system to deteriorate (the equivalent of a compromised immune system), we will pay the price of seeing the rise of

all kinds of opportunistic tyrants and their followers (diseases) who will, in one way or another, take advantage of our weakened state. This knowledge is not in itself new, but the analogy is, and I believe we should take it seriously.

PATRICIA MEYEROWITZ
Easton, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As the primary author of *The Military-Technical Revolution*, the Center for Strategic and International Studies' report castigated in A.J. Bacevich's "Learning from Aidid," I am flabbergasted by the conclusions he has drawn from it.

The main thrust of Mr. Bacevich's article is absolutely valid. Developing-world leaders like Mohammed Aidid can indeed use guerrilla warfare to frustrate the armies of more advanced countries. Military authorities have appreciated this fact for several hundred years; we did not "learn" it from Aidid. In fact, as Joshua Muravchik amply demonstrates in "Beyond Self-Defense," the United States only intervened in Somalia on the pretext of doing humani-

tarian, rather than military, work. That the Clinton administration's distortion of this policy was a mistake is now generally accepted.

Selective quotation is always a convenient way to make a point. Mr. Bacevich quotes many of the ambitious conclusions of our report about the effect of the military-technical revolution (MTR) on warfare. And indeed, we did use some rather expansive language, having made the careful decision that cultivating excitement for the MTR in the Pentagon was essential to overcoming the military's historic resistance to new forms of warfare.

But depicting our report as an argument for "American military superiority" capable of achieving victories in guerrilla warfare "without significant loss of American life" is a complete fabrication.

First, the report clearly concludes that "U.S. military forces ought to be designed . . . with primary emphasis on regional conflicts," rather than on guerrilla war. Our arguments about the MTR's revolutionary effects were made in the context of Desert Storm-



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style wars, not guerrilla conflicts.

While recognizing that the MTR can contribute to irregular warfare, here is what we said about the subject:

The security problems that underlie irregular operations are commonly dominated by vexing political, social, and economic dilemmas that, unlike the military threat posed by an enemy army, are not susceptible to the application of military force. . . . [I]rregular operations must be fundamentally nonmilitary efforts.

And later: "The MTR can make only a limited contribution to irregular operations." And again: ". . . this study has argued that technologies, doctrines, and organizations designed to fight a high-intensity MTR war will have only limited application to most kinds of irregular operations."

As Mr. Bacevich admits, we were also careful to point out that the MTR has not happened yet—thus hardly justifying the conclusion that we were "wrong" about Somalia. Indeed, our last chapter points out that

The successful implementation of the MTR is hardly guaranteed. . . . Throughout history, revolutions in military affairs have faced stiff barriers, which frequently have diluted, or even completely dissipated, their effects.

In short, our conclusions about the MTR's revolutionary effect upon warfare related to high-intensity regional wars, not guerrilla conflicts. We explicitly recognized the MTR's limited applicability to irregular wars.

Anyone with any doubt on this score should read Chapter 4 of the MTR report, on irregular war, and decide if it really argues that "American military power can henceforth achieve success [in guerrilla warfare] without significant loss of American life," as Mr. Bacevich suggests. In fact, the chapter says nothing of the sort.

In making a critically important, if well-worn, point about the risks of guerrilla warfare, A. J. Bacevich has badly misread our report. We still believe it constitutes an important statement about the future of large-scale, combined-arms warfare; it never attempted to apply its conclusions to the much murkier arena of guerrilla war.

MICHAEL J. MAZARR
Arlington, Virginia

A. J. BACEVICH writes:

I can well understand Michael J. Mazarr's desire to back away from the frothy language and glib claims that pervade his report on the so-called military-technical revolution. Yet his assertion that the report "never attempted to apply its conclusions" to situations of the sort encountered by American forces in Somalia simply will not wash. As he acknowledges, one entire chapter of his brief monograph concerns itself exclusively with irregular operations. That chapter explicitly cites Somalia as an example of the peace-enforcement and peacekeeping challenges that American forces can expect to confront. The chapter concludes:

MTR-type surveillance systems and smart weapons have great relevance to peace-enforcement operations. . . . Along with some of the doctrinal and organizational reforms suggested above, the MTR will help revolutionize the conduct of irregular operations.

Indeed, elsewhere the report calls for efforts to "modify MTR technologies, doctrines, and force structures in ways that do not detract from their combined-arms war-fighting and deterrent missions but that add greatly to their capabilities in irregular operations." But perhaps this is just more of that expansive language intended to prod the reactionary dunderheads in the Pentagon.

In the larger sense, Mr. Mazarr gives himself too much credit and, hence, takes needless offense. He did not invent the MTR. He merely helped market it, drafting one statement among many purporting to discover in Desert Storm the final secrets of warfare. That inflated expectations stemming from this overall misreading of Desert Storm contributed to the debacle of Mogadishu is incontrovertible. If Mr. Mazarr wants to claim responsibility for that misreading, he may do so. But my advice would be to lie low, say nothing, and allow his overblown report to sink into the oblivion that awaits it.

Saying Kaddish

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:
"Saying Kaddish" by Jacob Sloan [December 1993], who now intones the memorial prayer for his Gentile relatives, reminded me of an episode in my early childhood

when I became a steady attendant Friday nights and Saturdays at a Lower East Side *shul* on Rivington Street.

I knew that Kaddish was what someone who had lost a parent or child said three times a day for a year, the assigned period of mourning. Saying Kaddish was so important that if one were unsure there would be someone trustworthy enough to intone the prayer for the required year, one would hire *ante-mortem*—for money—some pious congregant who would substitute for a potentially delinquent son or other relative. In fact, it was not unusual for a father to refer to his son as "*mein kaddish*," usually with heavy sarcasm about having to depend on a son who would in a godless America undoubtedly grow up to be an unbeliever.

Kaddish is usually recited toward the end of the prayer service. . . . As I grew older, I began to note something I couldn't understand. Usually, over the months, the faces of Kaddish-sayers changed with the expiry of the required year of mourning. One face, I began to notice, never seemed to change—Reb Moishe Bear's. A big, broad-shouldered man (a carpenter, I recall), he was always saying Kaddish. Week after week, High Holy Days, Sabbath, and weekdays, Reb Moishe Bear, eyes shut tight, face rapt, head swaying from side to side, was always saying Kaddish, and loudly. At first, I assumed that he had a lot of relatives who were dying all the time, and I felt sorry for him because he was a nice man. But as I approached my barmitzvah year, I began to wonder: how could this be?

One Friday night, I decided to satisfy my curiosity. I asked my father about Reb Moishe Bear and what seemed like his terribly sad fate. "For whom is Reb Moishe Bear saying Kaddish?"

My father replied in Yiddish with a gentle smile: "*Er zagt Kaddish oyf der velt*"—he is saying Kaddish for the world.

I didn't know what my father meant. Didn't you have to have a death in the family? Not necessarily, said my father. Anybody over the age of thirteen could say Kaddish, and if Reb Moishe Bear wanted to say it "*oyf der velt*," he could do it and maybe even earn the merit of performing a *mitzvah*. I persisted: so why didn't my father do the same?

My father smiled; his sense of

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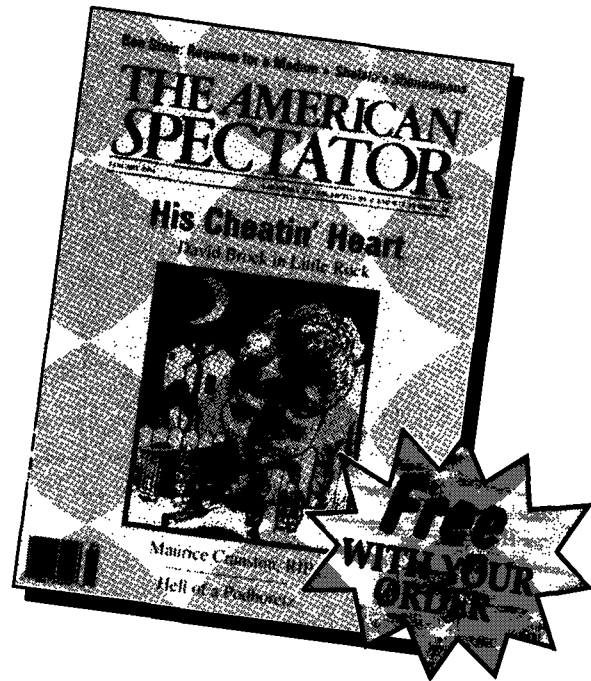
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tzneeyus (modesty), he said, prevented him from mourning for the world.

Not until years later did I grasp the gentle irony in my father's answer about people who undertake to say Kaddish "*oyf der velt*."

ARNOLD BEICHMAN

Hoover Institution
Stanford, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I had an experience similar to that of Jacob Sloan when I was fourteen years old and my father died. On my own, I went to a strange *shul* to say Kaddish. In my case, however, a miracle happened: there were two young women, also mourning a parent, who knew the ropes and helped me out. Like Mr. Sloan, I had been tutored in modern Hebrew but had never attended a religious service. I, too, recall dismal surroundings, the thump on the table to announce *minhah* (afternoon prayers), and the "us" vs. "them" mentality, but I wanted to say Kaddish for my father and was glad to be there. . . .

Mr. Sloan's parents did not teach him to find his way around the prayer book; neither did mine. To walk into a daily *minyan* without a guide is to be an alien in a foreign culture. . . . But from their point of view, the men in the *minyan* were doing what they were supposed to do—*davening* (praying). They might even have known that Mr. Sloan's father had not taught his son to say Kaddish—should they have done it for him?

Children of Orthodox parents are brought to *shul* as soon as they can walk the distance. By nine or ten they can find their way in the prayer book and certainly can recite Kaddish. They are known to the men of the *minyan* and can expect an insider's welcome. I do not say this to belittle Mr. Sloan's unhappy childhood experience, but it is a source of wonder to me that there are people who think that a *shul* is like a cinema with a long-running movie that they can duck into when they get around to it. . . .

Although Orthodox worshippers may pray by rote and may even do so in ugly rooms, it is my observation that they are clear about why they pray and about the substance of their prayers. I have heard people with an animus toward the Orthodox accuse them of not understanding the prayers and

of teaching their children by rote. In my experience this is not true; they know well that they pray to obey the commandments and the law, to achieve personal closeness to God, and to hasten the redemption of the world.

DOROTHY RAPOPORT
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jacob Sloan . . . states that he "gratefully, even gladly," accepts "God's superiority to the all too common and completely understandable human plea for the 'consolations of religion.'" He finds support for this view . . . in the following sentence from Nahum Glatzer's translation of the Kaddish:

He is high above all blessings and hymns, praises and words of solace which are uttered throughout the world.

It should be pointed out, however, that these lines are not the generally accepted translation of the original, which is commonly understood to correspond to Philip Birnbaum's rendering in his edition of the *siddur* (prayer book):

Blessed and praised, glorified and exalted, extolled and honored, adored and lauded be the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, beyond all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations that are ever spoken in the world.

What Glatzer translates as a new sentence beginning "He is high above," Birnbaum interprets as a prepositional phrase beginning "beyond," and modifying the words of blessing and praise which precede it. According to Birnbaum, therefore, the prayer states *not* that God is aloof from the prayers of man, but that man is incapable of appropriately praising God.

Support for Birnbaum's translation . . . is found not only in the syntax of the original, but in the fact that it is quoted in the article on that subject in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Similar translations appear in other widely used translations of the *siddur*. . . .

Birnbaum's translation does not contain the thought that God is superior to human grief. I do not think that that concept is consistent with traditional Jewish belief. One does not have to accept the concept, however, to find, as Mr.

Sloan does, a similarity in the theme of the Kaddish with the verse in Leviticus he quotes: "For the land is mine [God's], and you are but aliens who have become my tenants." Thus, Birnbaum comments, "The Kaddish, . . . recited on the occasion of a death, seems to express the sentiment: 'The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' (Job 1:21)."

SINCLAIR KOSOFF
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The traditional understanding of the lines Jacob Sloan quotes about God's being "high above all blessings and hymns, praises and words of solace . . ." is that all words of praise for God are insufficient to describe His greatness, but that He should be blessed and praised as if we were capable of expressing such praise.

There are divergent traditional interpretations of the word "*nehemata*," translated above as "words of solace." One view is that it is a synonym for praise, as in the Hebrew phrase "*shevah v'tanhumim*," meaning praises which give consolation to man. See, for example, Rashi in the Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 31a, who gives as an example of *tanhumim* the verse, "He does the will of those who fear Him" (Psalms 145).

A second view is that of Rabbi David Ben Joseph Abudarham (14th century) in his *Sefer Abudarham*, who interprets "*nehemata*" as referring to consolation. He explains that God Himself, as it were, mourns the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and finds comfort in events that tend toward their restoration. As Mr. Sloan notes, the Kaddish is a prayer for the coming of the messianic era. It is we, then, who, so to speak, console God, by the recitation of the Kaddish. We are praying that God will find it propitious to bring the messianic era so that He and we can be comforted. . . .

Perhaps in reciting the Kaddish we are saying that even God suffers loss and that we are not alone in our sadness. Mr. Sloan, a professed agnostic, acknowledges that he devoutly wishes that the existence of God could be proved. Why, however, he prefers a God who is removed from the world to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—that is, one who is vitally con-

cerned in the affairs of man—escapes me.

JORDAN POLLACK
Chicago, Illinois

JACOB SLOAN writes:

I am grateful to Arnold Beichman and Dorothy Rapoport for sharing their experiences of saying Kaddish with the readers of COMMENTARY. Mr. Beichman's letter is delightful, and I have read it several times with more and more pleasure.

I am sorry Miss Rapoport has taken offense at what she interprets as an attack on traditional, Orthodox Judaism. I was recollecting my own childhood (and childish) experience in an old-fashioned *shul* more than 60 years ago. As a child, the harum-scarum nature of the services and the garbled, mispronounced Hebrew of the congregants led me to believe that they prayed not out of a desire to "achieve personal closeness to God, and to hasten the redemption of the world," as Miss Rapoport says, but only to "obey the commandments and the law." I might not be so harsh in my judgments today, when the services I attend include many English translations, or, more often, paraphrases of the original. Yet even today I have the uneasy feeling that few, very few, persons who pray do so in the way Miss Rapoport describes. I respect her report of her own experience with (ideal) Orthodox worshippers. It is not mine. (I wish it were.)

Sinclair Kossoff prefers Philip Birnbaum's translation of the Kaddish to that of Nahum Glatzer in his anthology of liturgical texts, *Language of Faith*. I admit to being prejudiced in Glatzer's favor, since I worked under his supervision in translating many of the prayers in *Language of Faith* (but not the translation of the Kaddish). But I make no claim to being an Aramaic scholar. I do admit to preferring the wonderful metaphor of the Kabbalists for God's relation to man: they speak of the "abyss" that cannot be bridged between the divine and the human. I consider death to be part of that abyss. And I believe that traditional Judaism accepts the superiority of the immortal divine to mortal man. Moses, you may recall, in the Book of Deuteronomy pleads with God to be allowed to live on; but God, having decided that Moses' time has come, replies: "Let it suf-

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A Demilitarized Palestinian State Should Israel, should the world rely on it?

Even those most sanguine about the current peace negotiations are agreed that the Palestinian entity to be founded should be demilitarized. A demilitarized "West Bank" and Gaza Strip, it is believed, would do away with any military threat to the state of Israel.

What are the facts?

Israel surrounded by implacable foes. The countries that surround Israel are its deadly enemies. With the exception of Egypt, all other Arab states are still in a declared state of war with Israel. Iran, Moslem though not Arab, lurks in the background, its foremost military and political objective being the destruction of the state of Israel.

The PLO, is a terror organization that has only one purpose: to kill Jews and to

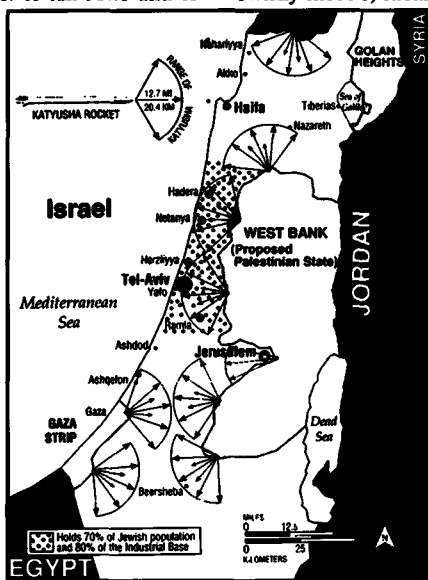
destroy the state of Israel. While the latter objective is beyond its reach, it has been most successful in the former. It seems almost incomprehensible that a group as supposedly levelheaded as the government of Israel would have entered into a "peace agreement" with such an organization. Not surprisingly, events since the famous "handshake" confirm such skepticism. The PLO has totally ignored Israel's main requirement, namely that it forswear the clause in its

"covenant" that calls for the destruction of Israel. Arafat and his lieutenants continue

to make blood-curdling speeches to the Arab public, in which they re-assert their old goal of destroying Israel in "stages".

The myth of demilitarization. The assumption that "Palestine" would be demilitarized is not tenable. The Arab nations would not allow it. But mobilization of the "demilitarized" Palestine wouldn't really be required. The weapons of preference of Arab terrorists are the Soviet-made Katyusha rockets, highly effective missiles, truck-mounted and swiftly mobile, ideal for hit-and-run raids

against Israel. A look at the map makes clear that these rockets, short-range though they may be, would literally dominate the heartland of Israel. Easily moved and hidden along Israel's new eastern borders—to be increased from about 40 miles to over 200 miles—they would rain destruction over most of Israel—covering in their entirety Israel's narrow waist that holds 70% of the Jewish population of the country, 80% of its industrial base, its only international airport, and its most important military installations.



The Arabs danced on the roofs of their houses when Iraqi Scud missiles fell on Tel Aviv during the Gulf War. Since the signing of the "peace agreement" they have continued in unrestrained terror and murder against the Jews—and against each other. Their hatred is undiminished and their avowed intention to destroy Israel has not been forsworn—in fact, it has repeatedly been re-affirmed. Only incurable optimists can believe that an "autonomous" Palestine would wish to become a peaceful neighbor of Israel. If Israel ceded the Gaza Strip—the invasion route since before biblical times—and Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") to its sworn enemies it would make the country indefensible. Tanks, warplanes, and missiles would only be needed for the final mopping-up process. In the meantime, mortars and Katyushas located on the Judean ridges—Israel's proposed new borders—would suffice to neutralize life and industrial and military activity in Israel.

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fice thee." Incidentally, T. Carmi, in his anthology of Hebrew verse (Penguin, 1981), includes a sequence of poems on the death of Moses (8th to 11th centuries). In one of the poems, Moses tries to guess what sin he committed that warrants his death. To each guess, God replies: "That is not why." Finally, Moses cries out: "If that is not why, why then should I die?" God, of course, has the final, irrefutable word: "Moses, go up and die, for it has been decreed that you shall die."

I am content with God's answer, as expressed in the Jewish (and, in fact, the world) tradition. There is no questioning God, or death.

I am impressed by Jordan Pollack's scholarship. It would appear that various scholars have recognized the difficulty the Kaddish presents, and have ingeniously circumvented the plain statement of the gulf between God's inexorable will and our human incapacity where death is concerned. We cannot sufficiently praise Him, but, as Mr. Pollack puts it, "He should be blessed and praised as if we were capable of expressing such praise" and "We are praying that God will find it propitious to bring the messianic era so that He and we can be comforted." The "as if" is reminiscent of William James's pragmatic axiom: "We should act as if there was a God." I doubt, too, that mourners now (or ever?) were willing to wait for the messianic era to be comforted. But Mr. Pollack has hit on the paradox in the Jewish tradition: it assumes a God who is far beyond human beings and yet is "vitaly concerned in the affairs of man."

The "New York Review"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Joseph Epstein ["Thirty Years of the 'New York Review,'" December 1993] is wrong to charge that although the *New York Review* defended human rights, it did so "without feeling the need (until fairly late in the game), to take the offensive against Communism." Probably the journal's most frequent reviewer of books on the Soviet Union from 1964 until his death in 1983 was my colleague at the London School of Economics, Leonard Schapiro, a strong and consistent anti-Communist, who was, moreover, quite conservative in his political views. Specifically on the subject of Soviet violations

of human rights, I myself contributed many articles to the *New York Review* from the early 1970's onward. Other authors wrote on violations of human rights in a wide variety of Communist countries. I might cite eight articles by Andrei Sakharov, beginning in 1974, many articles by Vaclav Havel, starting in 1977, as well as contributions by such writers as Simon Leys, Jonathan Mirsky, Adam Michnik, Gyorgy Konrad, Martin Malia, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, to mention only a few.

Your readers may agree that all this amounts to a prolonged offensive of considerable weight.

PETER REDDAWAY

George Washington University
Washington, D.C.

JOSEPH EPSTEIN writes:

Everything Peter Reddaway says is true. The only difficulty is that what he says is very far from the whole truth. While the *New York Review* never praised the Soviet Union, the chief thrust of its politics in the realm of foreign policy was that of anti-anti-Communism. The gravamen of anti-anti-Communism, of course, was to play down the human misery that Communism caused in the world, to feature strong anti-Communists as overdramatizing the wretchedness of Communism, either because of their own mental deficiencies or because of what they stood to gain by doing so.

Next to the *New York Review's* unrelenting campaign against anti-Communism as something much overdone, something that was tearing up the United States and standing in the way of progressive reform, the occasional contributions of such men as Leonard Schapiro loom very minor indeed. As for the later publication by the *New York Review* of such writers as Havel, Michnik, and others from the Communist satellite countries, there was no special honor in publishing them, for by then everyone was on the anti-Soviet bandwagon and these pieces could as easily have appeared in any one of a score of magazines in the West.

The Religious Right

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Terry Eastland's article, "Religion, Politics & the Clintons" [January], with great interest. Along with a discussion of President Clinton's support for the reli-

gious Left, Mr. Eastland has carefully explored the diverse currents impinging upon the efforts of conservative Christians to preserve their religious beliefs and practices.

I have had the opportunity to work closely with many members of this group of religious conservatives and have found them to be a wide spectrum of Americans seriously concerned about the direction our country has been taking in the last several years. Their concerns are shared by . . . the Jewish community. This group originated . . . as a result of the breakdown in . . . liberal Protestantism. The liberal Protestant community has become largely a-theological, devoting itself to what it calls social welfare, including support for the PLO and for revolution. This is notoriously true among Quakers. Religious conservatives, who are very loosely defined, felt that they had to restore the integrity of the Protestant structure in religion, and so people like Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell initiated their current activities. . . . When they started, they found they could not achieve as much change as they would have liked, and so they resorted to political action. Their opponents criticize this, but it is part of the American process: to desire change and to use the political route as a means of achieving that change.

It should also be noted that Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson were very close friends of Menachem Begin, and a major part of this group of religious conservatives is very pro-Israel and not anti-Semitic. It has been said that theological reasons account for this attitude, but this is not so; these people are expressing their spontaneous feelings. . . . It is a little-noted fact that much anti-Semitism in America today comes from the liberal and radical Left, not the Christian Right; . . . it is pure demagoguery to compare Louis Farrakhan, a notorious anti-Semite and an anti-democratic personality, with the fundamentalists who are part of the religious conservative movement. . . .

One frequently hears it said that those who opposed Clinton's budget proposal and who are opposed to his so-called health-care-reform plan are in some way evil. But the future of America depends on the free and open interchange of conflicting opinions . . . so that we can

arrive at justified conclusions. To say, for example, that the Jewish community is unqualifiedly liberal and then say that any opinion that diverges from liberal principles is somehow wrong, is completely to misread the American process.

The conservative philosophy of reduced government intervention, increased individual opportunity, and the free-enterprise system, combined with a strong national defense, is more consistent with the best interests of the American people and of the Jewish community than is the liberal philosophy, . . . with its increasing emphasis on government intervention and reduced individual responsibility. It is important to remember that the best outlook for Jews occurs when the American community is flourishing and the economy is producing well, with rewards for all. This certainly is more likely to occur under conservative leadership than under so-called liberal leadership, . . . which is antithetical to the free-enterprise system.

PAUL S. FRIEDMAN
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Jews & the State

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his otherwise comprehensive review of Benjamin Ginsberg's *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State* [January], Jay P. Lefkowitz fails to discuss a key shortcoming of the book: its underlying premise that it is *Jewish* behavior that is the prime instigator of anti-Semitism.

In his book, Ginsberg omits any discussion of Christian or Islamic theological anti-Semitism; the psychological bases of racism and bigotry; or other sociopathic phenomena that have plagued the Jewish

people over the centuries. From this perspective, it is not surprising that Ginsberg collapses into his own "fatal embrace" with the Jews. He goes to great lengths to document what he apparently perceives as longstanding Jewish domination of European life, and then slides into a venting of his own frustration with the children of Moses.

Thus he quips that "Jews are extremely successful outsiders who sometimes have the temerity to rub it in." Ginsberg also reinforces allegations popular in the black community:

Jews cannot afford to engage in or tolerate political tactics or public rhetoric that seriously threaten to discredit blacks. This is one of the major reasons that Jewish racism, often expressed privately, seldom manifests itself publicly.

Then there is his repetition of anti-Semitic notions from the Depression era: "Jews were sufficiently important to the Roosevelt regime—there was, after all, a sense in which the New Deal *was* a Jew Deal. . ." (emphasis in original).

I believe that the Jewish community has a problem if this book is representative of the current trend of "scholarship" on the issue of anti-Semitism.

GARY WOLF

New York City

JAY P. LEFKOWITZ writes:

Unlike Gary Wolf, I did not understand the underlying premise of Benjamin Ginsberg's argument in *The Fatal Embrace* to be that "*Jewish* behavior is the prime instigator of anti-Semitism." Rather, I understood his premise as being that anti-Semitism is often instigated by the *reaction* of non-Jews to Jewish proximity to political power.

Mr. Wolf also argues that Ginsberg is "collaps[ing] into his own 'fatal embrace' with the Jews" by seeming to parrot various anti-Semitic diatribes, and he is correct to point out that some of Ginsberg's offhand quips are inappropriate. But Ginsberg's comment that "there was, after all, a sense in which the New Deal *was* a Jew Deal" is not one of them. Here, Mr. Wolf fails to consider the context of that particular quote. What Ginsberg said was that

Jews were sufficiently important to the Roosevelt regime—there was, after all, a sense in which the New Deal *was* a Jew Deal—that it could not follow the example of the Gilded Age industrialists and simply jettison its Jewish problem.

Though perhaps in questionable taste, this is neither inaccurate nor objectionable. Many non-Jews did consider the New Deal to be a "Jew Deal." As Ginsberg points out, the "foes of the Roosevelt administration were able to continue to make use of anti-Semitism to mobilize opposition against the President and his policies." At the same time, many Jews also shared the view that the New Deal was a "Jew Deal," at least to the extent that it was a great deal for the Jews. In fact, this judgment was so firmly held that to this day, a great many Jews would not even consider voting against the party of Roosevelt.

Finally, while Ginsberg's book has its shortcomings, its lack of a serious discussion of Christian or Islamic theological anti-Semitism is not among them. Such a discussion would have been extraneous to his thesis, which was that Jewish achievement of political power engenders anti-Semitism.



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Black Anti-Semitism & How It Grows

Arch Puddington

WHAT has come to be known as the Kean College incident has focused renewed attention on the problem of black anti-Semitism on the American college campus. Yet for all the uproar provoked by that incident and subsequent ones, there is still no clear recognition of the extent to which it is the imposition of an agenda of multiculturalism and "diversity" that is responsible for making open, poisonous, anti-Jewish bigotry into a veritable fixture of campus political life.

The basic facts about the Kean College incident are by now well known. On November 19, 1993, Khalid Abdul Muhammad, a prominent member of the Nation of Islam and the national spokesman of its leader, Louis Farrakhan, delivered a three-hour speech to a predominantly black audience at Kean College, a state-funded institution which draws its student body from the declining working-class cities of northern New Jersey. From beginning to end, the address was charged with an astonishing degree of malice, contempt, and ridicule, aimed variously at whites, South Africans, homosexuals, Arabs, and black moderates—a case, if ever there was one, of equal-opportunity hate.

Muhammad's principal target, however, was Jews. In addition to dwelling on the traditional anti-Semitic stereotype of the all-powerful Jew, and asserting that Jews "want nothing but money," he made a special point of their crimes against blacks. He charged that Jews had dominated the slave trade in the past and that they now had black athletes, entertainers, and politicians in their grasp. He accused Jewish landlords of exploiting black tenants. He belittled Jewish participation in the civil-rights movement. And he traced the origins of Judaism to black Africa, arguing that those who today call themselves Jews are really false Jews, the genuine Jews being the descendants of African slaves.

These were some of the "truths" that Farrakhan himself subsequently endorsed at a press

conference where he also announced that, because of the unfortunate "tone" in which they had been expressed, Muhammad was being temporarily removed from his position as spokesman. As to that "tone," the most frequently quoted passage, in which Muhammad accused Jews of "sucking the blood of the black community," was only one example, and by no means the most repulsive, of a rhetoric seldom encountered even on the farthest fringes of the anti-Semitic Right.

Thus, Union County, where Kean College is located, he called a "Jew stronghold," and he also referred to "Columbia Jewniversity," "Jew York City," and the "Jewnited Nations." In speaking of the Jewish people and their religion, Muhammad used the phrase "synagogue of Satan." In a passage presumably meant as humor, he described the alleged Jewish control of the gem industry in the following terms:

That's why you call yourself Mr. Rubinstein, Mr. Goldstein, Mr. Silverstein. Because you been stealing rubies and gold and silver all over the earth. That's why we can't even wear a ring or a bracelet or a necklace without calling it Jew-elry. We say it real quick and call it jewelry, but it's not jewelry, it's Jew-elry, 'cause you're the rogue that's stealing all over the face of the planet.

Regarding the Holocaust, Muhammad suggested that the Jews had it coming:

You see everybody always talk about Hitler exterminating six million Jews. . . . But don't nobody ever ask what did they do to Hitler? . . . They went in there, in Germany, the way they do everywhere they go, and they supplanted, they usurped, . . . and a German, in his own country, would almost have to go to a Jew to get money. . . . Now he was an arrogant, no-good devil bastard, Hitler, no question about it. He was wickedly great. . . . But they [the Jews] are wickedly great, too, brother.

And in discussing the Jewish role in the civil-rights movement, Muhammad resorted to a bit of racist mockery:

The Jews have told us, the so-called Jews have told us, ve [*sic*], ve, ve suffer like you. Ve, ve, ve, ve marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ve, ve, ve were in Selma, Alabama. Ve, ve were

ARCH PUDDINGTON worked for some years as an aide to the late civil-rights leader Bayard Rustin. His articles in COMMENTARY include "The NAACP Turns Left" (January 1994), "Is White Racism the Problem?" (July 1992), and "The Question of Black Leadership" (January 1991).

in Montgomery, Alabama. Ve, ve were on the front line of the civil-rights marches. Ve have always supported you. But let's take a look at it. The Jews, the so-called Jews, what they have actually done, brothers and sisters, is used us as cannon fodder.

WHILE Muhammad's remarks triggered a major controversy at Kean College, the incident did not gain wider notoriety until, nearly a month later, an article appeared in the *New York Times* detailing some of his more outrageous statements. In response, a few commentators like the *Times* columnist A.M. Rosenthal and a handful of moderate black figures moved quickly to condemn the speech and to urge that the black civil-rights and political leadership do the same.

But the overall reaction was, to put it mildly, muted until the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) placed a paid advertisement in the *Times* and other publications consisting almost solely of quotes from the Kean address. At that point, the Reverend Jesse Jackson, the Reverend Benjamin Chavis of the NAACP, and prominent members of the Congressional Black Caucus issued statements that, if belated, were at least forthright in rejecting Khalid Muhammad's language as well as his ideas. But they showed no such forthrightness on the larger question of the black leadership's relationship with Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam. On the contrary, on this question they were cautious and circumspect.

The problem was that only recently Farrakhan, despite his well-documented anti-white and anti-Jewish ideology, had been welcomed into the ranks of black leadership. During a summit held only two months before the Kean College incident, Representative Kweisi Mfume (D.-Md.), the chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, announced that the caucus had forged a "sacred covenant" with the Nation of Islam to pursue mutually agreed-upon civil-rights goals—an announcement that elicited Chavis's wholehearted support. It seemed, then, that an absolute commitment to racial and religious tolerance was no longer a qualification for recognition as a member of America's black political leadership.

In the aftermath of Kean College, however, some members of the Black Caucus began distancing themselves from the alliance with Farrakhan. Several even claimed that no such agreement had ever been reached, that Mfume had simply unilaterally announced the accord without consulting other black Congressmen.

The most outspoken comments were made by Representative Major Owens (D.-NY), who called the idea of an alliance with Farrakhan "suicide for the black community" and denounced the Nation of Islam as a "hate-mongering fringe group." Owens said that Farrakhan had already held three unpublicized meetings with the Black

Caucus at which he focused not on legislation, but on requests that the caucus assist the Nation of Islam in securing federal contracts for a prison-inmate rehabilitation program and in gaining other contracts from officials in Africa, where the Nation of Islam hopes to buy land.

But Owens's unequivocal rejection of an alliance with Farrakhan, though seconded by Congressmen Mel Reynolds of Chicago and John R. Lewis of Atlanta, appeared to be a minority position among black leaders. Following Farrakhan's statement endorsing the "truths" uttered by Khalid Muhammad—a statement which included a sharp attack on the ADL—both Jesse Jackson and Benjamin Chavis commended him and voiced satisfaction that he had put the unpleasantness to rest by demoting Muhammad. Chavis declared flatly that he was prepared to believe that Farrakhan was "neither anti-Semitic nor racist," and insisted that Farrakhan would be invited to a forthcoming summit meeting of black leaders.

THIS raises the question of what, exactly, are Farrakhan's views on Jews and Judaism. His apologists contend that while he did indeed call Judaism a "gutter religion" some years ago, he has moderated his attitude over time and has even made such important gestures toward the Jewish community as publicly performing the solo part in the Mendelssohn Violin Concerto (!) and meeting with a prominent Jewish journalist in Chicago. Yet to conclude that a new and unprejudiced Farrakhan has emerged requires that one not only cast aside Farrakhan's past obsession with Jews and Jewish influence, but also ignore what he and the Nation of Islam are saying and doing right now.

One must ignore the fact that the Nation of Islam publishes *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, a pseudo-history, with no listed author, which purports to prove that the slave trade was dominated by Jews. One must ignore the fact that the Nation of Islam continues to distribute the infamous anti-Semitic forgery, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. One must ignore the fact that anti-Semitism is central to the message of Khalid Muhammad and other speakers who represent the Nation of Islam at campus forums. And one must ignore Farrakhan's own words, not uttered five or ten years ago, but within the past year.

In the midst of the Khalid Muhammad furor, for instance, Farrakhan told an audience in Harlem that Jews "are the most organized, rich, and powerful people, not only in America, but in the world," and added that they were "plotting against us even as we speak." More telling were his comments in a *Chicago Sun-Times* interview conducted in July 1993. Presented with an ideal fence-mending opportunity, Farrakhan respond-

ed by actually reinforcing the anti-Semitic dimension of his message:

When I talk to the Jews, I am talking to a segment of that quorum that holds my people in their grip. And I can't get to you unless I get to them first because they got a grip on you whether you want to admit it or not because they got a grip on politicians, on black preachers, on black intellectuals.

. . . [It] is like the Bible. They are elders of Israel, but the elders of Israel are under the control of Pharaoh and your . . . top black leaders, your top black intellectuals, your top black professional sports and entertainers are not under our control. They are under the control of those who have done injustices to the masses of black people, so I have to go to them to get you out of their grips so you can work for your people and their salvation rather than work on a job for your enemy.

In the same interview, Farrakhan described himself as "the lone voice for black people," and left no doubt that he believed he had attained this position by refusing to knuckle under to demands that he renounce his anti-Jewish "truths."

That Farrakhan declined to disavow Khalid Muhammad's opinions, then, should have come as no surprise: Muhammad, after all, was only repeating ideas, albeit in less temperate language, taught by his leader, including most definitely the notorious proposition that Jews are "sucking the blood" of the black community.

A PART from the black leaders who issued a narrow disavowal of Khalid Muhammad's remarks, and the ones who ventured a broader repudiation of Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, there was a third category. It consisted of those who, while not sympathizing with Farrakhan's anti-Semitism, expressed annoyance at the demand that black leaders condemn every new expression of bigotry to emerge from any black source. One member of the Black Caucus, Congressman Charles Rangel of New York, actually taxed the ADL with having exploited what he perceived as a minor and isolated episode to raise money and gain publicity. Why, Rangel asked, had not a joke by Senator Ernest Hollings (D.-S.C.), which depicted African leaders as cannibals, provoked a furor similar to that triggered by Muhammad's speech at Kean College?

The *Amsterdam News*, New York's principal black newspaper, eagerly picked up the same theme, accusing the ADL of the "willful and cynical exploitation of a people for the purpose of raising money from Jews by frightening them." A similar emphasis colored the coverage in *Time* magazine. It titled its analysis "Enforcing Correctness," and expressed sympathy with what was depicted as exasperated black leaders under constant pressure from whites, and mainly Jews, to

disavow any "semi-obscure black figure [who] says something outrageous or anti-Semitic."

Now Rangel has never been identified with the more militant, nationalist-oriented members of the Black Caucus. His district contains a fair percentage of whites, many of whom are Jewish. But it also contains Harlem and a constituency of loyal followers of Louis Farrakhan. While the formal nationwide membership of the Nation of Islam is not believed to be especially impressive—most estimates fall in the 10,000 to 15,000 range—Farrakhan himself commands a substantially larger following, including many middle-class blacks. Over 30,000 admirers packed a recent Farrakhan address in New York, and over 10,000 attended a rally in Harlem where attendance was limited to black men. No other figure in black America could draw the large and enthusiastic crowds which regularly jam Farrakhan's meetings; and indeed, the Black Politics Study conducted at the University of Chicago has found that a whopping 67 percent of black respondents consider Farrakhan a positive force in the black community, with a mere 28 percent viewing him negatively. The results of a *Time*/CNN Poll are even more discouraging, with 70 percent of black respondents agreeing that Farrakhan "says things the country should hear," 63 percent agreeing that he "speaks the truth," and only 34 percent seeing him as "a bigot and a racist."

Farrakhan's appeal may stem in part from his preachments against drugs and black-on-black violence and his emphasis on black self-respect, but there is no question that racism is fundamental to his popularity. When, for instance, during one of his New York speeches, he mentioned the black man who, in a deranged orgy of racial vengeance, killed six non-black passengers on the Long Island Railroad, Farrakhan was greeted by sustained applause. The applause was a testimony to the level of racial resentment that pervades the Farrakhan constituency, a resentment he has labored long and hard to exploit.

So far as Jews in particular are concerned, black attitudes provide a fertile field for Farrakhan. Almost every poll shows a higher level of anti-Semitism among blacks than among other groups. In a 1992 ADL survey, only 14 percent of black respondents registered no anti-Semitism, whereas 37 percent fell into the category of most anti-Semitic, more than double the level found among non-Jewish whites. Other polls have shown that better-educated blacks tend to be more anti-Semitic than blacks with less education, a reversal of the pattern in the general population.

One has to conclude that this situation is likely to get worse when one considers how seriously off the mark Rangel is in dismissing the Kean College incident as an isolated and therefore unimportant case. For the truth is that it is an all-too-typical example of the growing phenomenon

of unconcealed, virulent black anti-Semitism on college campuses.

Indeed, while Khalid Muhammad may have been an obscure figure nationally before his appearance at Kean, he was most certainly no stranger to college students, having frequently addressed groups at both black and multiracial colleges. Very often the message, and even the vocabulary, were similar to the Kean address. At Columbia, he employed the line about "Columbia Jewniversity" and "Jew York City." During a second appearance at Columbia, he praised Henry Ford (who in his own day had also distributed the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*) for standing up to "international Jewry." And at Mary Washington College, speaking on the first night of Passover, he declared that "blacks, not Jews, are God's chosen people" and accused Jews of "working to keep blacks ignorant and repressed."

Another favorite campus speaker, Professor Griff, once associated with the rap group Public Enemy, charged at Southern Connecticut State University that Jewish doctors have injected black babies with AIDS. A similar message has been delivered to the campuses by Conrad Muhammad, a Nation of Islam official: while attacking Zionism, he declares that whites have deliberately introduced drugs into the black community as a measure of control. At the University of Minnesota, the Africana [sic] Studies Department sponsored a series of speakers with "anti-Zionist" themes. They included Farrakhan, Steve Cokely (a Chicago figure who was removed from a political post for anti-Semitic utterances), and Kwame Ture (the former Stokely Carmichael). Ture's contribution was to repeat the unspeakable lie that "the Zionists joined with the Nazis in murdering Jews" in order to encourage Jews to flee to Palestine. This past February, Ture delivered the initial lecture during Black History Month at the Community College of Philadelphia. In the course of his talk, he characterized "Zionism" as an oppressive movement working to stifle black progress.

In short, there is a cadre of professional black anti-Semites who travel from campus to campus, sometimes appearing in tandem, preaching a message virulent enough to earn the appreciation of Julius Streicher. And, it should be noted, being well rewarded for their efforts. Muhammad was paid \$2,650 for the Kean College speech; more prominent speakers, like Farrakhan, earn higher fees.

NOR is the problem of black anti-Semitism on campus limited to the controversial personalities invited to deliver guest lectures. At CCNY, Professor Leonard Jeffries, Jr. continues to serve as chairman of the Black Studies Department despite a well-established record

of anti-Semitism. (Jeffries, incidentally, has served as an adviser to Kean College and has spoken there on more than one occasion.) At Wellesley, Tony Martin, a tenured professor in the Africana Studies Department, who has assigned his class readings from *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, hit back against criticism by saying that "anti-Semitism . . . has become for the privileged and powerful U.S. Jewish leadership and their unthinking Negro stooges, a bludgeon to subdue dissent, stifle discussion, deprive African-Americans of a living, and perpetuate historical lies." He also said, in a formulation quite similar to Khalid Muhammad's charge that Jews used blacks as "cannon fodder" during the civil-rights movement, that the "Jewish Establishment has concluded that a prostrate African-American population, to be oppressed or paternalized as the times warrant, will continue to be an insurance against a Euro-American reversion to European anti-Jewish activity."

Of course, we could dismiss the ravings of Farrakhan and his acolytes if it were clear that their extremism and bigotry were rejected by the target audience of black students. Yet the evidence collected by journalists who have covered the controversies over black anti-Semitism on campus suggests that many black students are more than willing to give the most absurd and hate-driven views the benefit of the doubt.

This was certainly the case at Kean College. To one black student, Muhammad's speech represented "racial pride." Another said the speech was "not hate," but rather "just culture," and added that, "They come down on everyone who tells the truth." Another student asserted that it would be "wrong for me to tell him to change his thoughts because someone else might be offended by what he says."

These reactions echoed remarks made by black students on other colleges who became acquainted with Muhammad's world view. Muhammad "has a message that speaks to the black youth," commented a student at Morgan State University. A law student at Howard University called Muhammad a "freedom fighter, a staunch role model, besides being exciting, charismatic, and appealing intellectually." Similarly, a Barnard undergraduate found Muhammad's opinions "very enlightening, thought-provoking, and above all true."

Such "enlightening" and "true" opinions have not been restricted to exhortations about black pride. In an incident which took place this past February, it was students at Howard University, one of black America's proudest institutions, who took the lead in an anti-Jewish demonstration which, if press accounts are to be believed, resembled a Nazi-party rally. On this occasion, for a change, Khalid Muhammad himself, as the featured speaker, delivered a prudently restrained

talk. But a student leader, Malik Zulu Shabazz, warmed up the crowd with a scathing attack on Jewish cultural and economic domination. Although his arguments paralleled those often expressed by Farrakhan, Muhammad, *et al.*, the presentation, as described by the *Washington Post*, reflected an alarming tactic of actively stimulating anti-Jewish hatred:

Each time Shabazz noted one of those [areas of Jewish control], he paused to ask the crowd who controlled it, and the crowd shouted back: "Jews." At one point, after what he thought was a tepid response, Shabazz asked the crowd, "Are you afraid to say it?" The crowd then shouted louder: "Jews, Jews."

Shabazz, it should be noted, was only one of several speakers that evening who gave voice to anti-Jewish passions: another declared that the motto for black people should no longer be, "We Shall Overcome," but rather, "We Shall Not Sell Out to the Jews."

FOLLOWING upon Muhammad's speech there, Kean College officials have placed much of the blame on the growing pains of multiculturalism and diversity. To be sure, Kean College is a diverse campus, with over one-quarter of the student body black or Hispanic. By citing diversity and multiculturalism, however, college administrators were not referring to the racial or ethnic proportions within the student body, but to a broader, and much more politically-loaded concept. Elsa Gomez, the college's president, alluded to this when she said that Kean was "paying the painful price of our commitment to diversity and the challenge to empower students, who often come from a disadvantaged background, to achieve their full potential."

The key word here is "empower." On campus after campus, the idea of diversity has been advanced to justify not simply extending a measure of authority to students as students—as was the case during the campus wars of the 60's—but to give authority to students as members of certain preferred groups: blacks, Latinos, homosexuals, Asians.

Each group is permitted, or, more precisely, expected, to establish its own lobbying entity and publications. On many campuses, blacks and other minority students segregate themselves in exclusive dormitories. Often, space is set aside in the official campus newspaper for the different groups to air their views, where they usually lament their victimization. Student-activity funds are divided among the various ethnic and gender lobbies, and this money is used to pay guest speakers, who are invited without interference from the school administration. Hence the many speaking engagements for Farrakhan, Khalid Muhammad, Professor Griff, and their ilk.

One of the great myths disseminated by the

multiculturalists is that their policies represent a way to bring harmony to institutions troubled by the problems associated with interracial student bodies. As one Kean official told a reporter, with unintended irony: "When you're a diverse, multicultural institution, you're continually working to bring people together—that's what diversity and multiculturalism are all about."

In practice, however, the diversity agenda has deepened racial, sexual, and ethnic tensions at universities all across the country. In fact, the accentuation of difference is what diversity is "all about," as the movement's more candid advocates will readily acknowledge. Diversity gurus reject the very notion of universal values which unite Americans as Americans, and they are using multiculturalism as a siege weapon aimed at what turns out to be America's most vulnerable institution, the university. On the ground, where the battles are fought, the diversity agenda works not to bridge differences, but to stimulate a sense of minority grievance and to enable racial minorities, homosexuals, and feminists to acquire and protect turf, secure jobs and resources, dilute standards, and reshape curriculum.

A by-product of the diversity movement is the symbiotic relationship that has developed among black student unions and the black-studies departments and affirmative-action bureaucracies at many universities. Certainly there are excellent black-studies departments where scholars conduct research, teach effectively, and are conscientious about counseling black students. Yet all too often, black-studies departments have dismal records of academic accomplishment and function mainly as a base of operations for racial rabble-rousers like Leonard Jeffries.

Inevitably, the diversity advocates come into conflict with Jewish academics. Jews are "over-represented" on the faculty at many colleges and tend to be among the strongest defenders of the standards and qualifications which multiculturalists identify as impediments to their advancement. James Conyers, assistant dean of Kean's Africana Studies Department, touched on this theme when, in the midst of the furor over the Khalid Muhammad speech, he charged that Jewish professors were part of a "white power structure on campus that operates in a covert fashion covered up by the jargon of academia."

Meanwhile, college officials have made it clear that they are powerless to prevent a repetition of the Kean College incident. Administrators who not so long ago were busily formulating elaborate hate-speech codes, subjecting violators to sensitivity-training sessions, and persecuting a Pennsylvania University student for calling a group of noisy black sorority girls "water buffaloes," now contend they are helpless to deal with genuine examples of hate speech when voiced by outside speakers or even faculty members. In-

stead, college officials counsel more seminars and teach-ins about tolerance and encourage dialogue between the aggrieved parties. Thus Trenton State College decided to "balance" an appearance by Khalid Muhammad, who had been invited to speak prior to the Kean College incident, by sponsoring a talk by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., a black scholar from Harvard who has been pilloried by the Nation of Islam for his criticism of anti-Semitism.

The very idea of a distinguished academic like Gates being used to "balance" the ravings of a fringe demagogue like Muhammad is vivid, if sickening, testimony to the deterioration in intellectual and civic standards that has occurred at many institutions of higher learning. The same can be said of the proposition that black and Jewish students can engage in a "dialogue" over ideas which, not so long ago, would have been dismissed as unworthy of discussion.

IF ANYTHING at all positive were to emerge from this whole appalling episode, it would be the rethinking of certain assumptions about American political life and our institutions of higher learning.

To begin with, we need a thorough reassessment of the black-Jewish relationship. Many Jews, and most Jewish organizations, still hope that their traditional alliance with blacks can be repaired and maintained. But the brutal truth is that in black anti-Semitism we are faced with a phenomenon that is not about to go away and

that is no longer confined entirely to the lunatic fringe.

Nor, as the reaction of Jesse Jackson and Benjamin Chavis demonstrates, is there much chance that mainstream black leadership will break decisively with those who brazenly encourage the spread of anti-Semitism. Ironically, the continued Jewish belief in a special relationship only serves to embolden Farrakhan and his followers to make ever more outrageous statements in the knowledge that Jews, unlike other whites, will react not simply with anger, but with wounded innocence and appeals for "dialogue" and "healing." Abandoning the fiction of the special relationship might thus have the paradoxical effect of contributing to a reduction of racial tensions.

If this kind of reevaluation is warranted with regard to black-Jewish relations, a similar process is essential where higher education is concerned. The diversity program, which grows stronger even as the list of atrocity stories grows longer, has become the single most virulent source of anti-Semitism in America today. This problem will not be resolved by fretting over speech regulations, First Amendment rights, or balancing hate speech with reason and common sense. The root cause, to borrow a once-popular term, is multiculturalism itself. Unless that reality is confronted, our colleges and universities will deteriorate still further, and anti-Semitism, already dangerously widespread among blacks, will spread among them even more, with what consequences no one can foretell.

Getting Away With Murder

Walter Berns

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed; which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

—U.S. Constitution, Sixth Amendment

TRIAL by a jury of one's peers is a venerable institution. Like Blackstone before him in England, the American Joseph Story, in his justly famous *Commentaries on the Constitution* (1833), traced it back to 1215 and Magna Carta, and, again like Blackstone, proceeded to quote the relevant passages from the original Latin: "*nisi per legale iudicium parium suorum, vel per legem terrae*," and all that. "When," he continued, "our more immediate ancestors removed to America, they brought this great privilege with them, as their birthright and inheritance." Especially valuable in criminal trials, the jury system had a great object: "To guard against a spirit of oppression and tyranny on the part of rulers, and against a spirit of violence and invictiveness on the part of the people."

Even as Story was writing this, however, Alexis de Tocqueville, the most perspicacious among observers of American institutions and practices, found reason to question the utility of juries. True, they served an important political purpose; like the town meetings where a New England resident learned the art of government by being required to practice it, the jury served as a school for citizenship: "By obliging men to turn their attention to affairs other than their own, it rubs off that private selfishness which is the rust of [democratic] society." But as a *judicial* institution, one that "ensures a good administration of justice"? About this, Tocqueville had his doubts.

He would have graver doubts today. There has, of course, never been any guarantee that juries will convict the obviously guilty or acquit the obviously innocent—among the latter, think, for

example, of Ozie Powell, Haywood Patterson, and Charley Weems (the Scottsboro Boys), poor blacks wrongly convicted of rape by an Alabama jury in 1931; or of the not-so-poor but Jewish Leo Frank, wrongly convicted by a Georgia jury in 1913 of the murder of one Mary Phagan. Juries can be manipulated, or terrorized—or they can simply be prejudiced.

The last problem is an old one, and derives in part from the difficulty—sometimes the impossibility—of impaneling an unbiased or, to adopt the language of the Sixth Amendment, an impartial, jury. In the year 1255, for example, King Henry III ordered the arrest of some 92 Jews on charges of ritual murder, and on being indicted and sent to London for trial, eighteen of them (to quote from an English legal publication), "regarding conviction as a foregone conclusion unless they were allowed a mixed jury, refused to put themselves upon the country." This was construed as a confession of guilt, and the eighteen were summarily executed.

The privilege of being tried by a mixed jury—or, in the official language of the time, by a panel *de medietate*, which, in this case, meant half-Jewish, half-Christian—was sometimes honored and sometimes denied or revoked; when honored, it served as some protection for the Jewish community. (The protection came to an end on November 1, 1290, All Saints' Day, when Edward I "issued a decree consigning the Jewry of England to perpetual banishment.")

In due course, the British adopted the practice of drawing a jury from the "vicinage" or neighborhood of the crime, and, in his draft of the Bill of Rights, James Madison proposed similar language for the Sixth Amendment. Defeated in the Senate, he had to be content with the requirement that the jury be drawn from the state or district "wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law." But the principle was the same: propinquity would mean similarity, and a jury drawn from the neighborhood would be a jury of peers.

Now, however, we have come full circle, as all sorts of people have begun to insist that juries cannot be impartial unless they are "representative," or "mixed," as the English put it centuries ago. Blacks have been in the forefront of this

WALTER BERNs is John M. Olin University Professor at Georgetown University and the author of, among other works, *The First Amendment and the Future of American Democracy*.

movement—whether on trial themselves (as in the case of Congressman Harold E. Ford of Tennessee) or as the victims of alleged crimes committed by others (Rodney King, or the black motorcyclist shot by a white Hispanic policeman in Miami).

In response to this pressure, several state legislatures, including Florida's, have proposed laws guaranteeing racially-balanced juries—in apparently flagrant violation of the Sixth Amendment. Thus it is that the redoubtable leftist lawyer William M. Kunstler, representing El Sayyid A. Nosair, the accused assassin of Rabbi Meir Kahane, could demand a jury of “third-world people” and get it. (Having done so, he won an acquittal on the murder charge.) And in addition to the difficulties created by a community divided along religious and racial lines, we now face something new, likely to prove the most intractable of all: a community divided along the lines of sex.

But the problem with jury trials is only partly a problem of finding an impartial panel of jurors. “The law is not made by judges alone, but by judge and company,” said Jeremy Bentham some 200 years ago, who knew what he was talking about. And what a “company” it is that makes law in our day! Expert witnesses allowed to testify as to matters they obviously know nothing about; defense attorneys who encourage their clients to lie through their teeth, as if perjury were a legitimate trial tactic; judges who refuse to punish the practice, or even to take cognizance of it; and, last but not least, members of the national television audience who play a role similar to that once played by vengeful mobs outside Southern courthouses, except that they can now be counted on to express their compassion not for the victims of crime but for the defendants.

Criminal trials, required by the Constitution to be “speedy” and “public,” have become, at best, long-running soap operas and, at worst (and all too frequently), travesties of justice. Two such were the trials of Lorena Bobbitt and of the Menendez brothers.

LORENA BOBBITT, an immigrant from Ecuador by way of Venezuela, claimed she was repeatedly raped by her husband, John Wayne Bobbitt, a former Marine. She did not leave him (which she could afford to do because she was the main breadwinner in the family), or file for divorce (not, after all, unheard of in our day), or, prior to the event that made her famous, bring marital-rape charges against him (like campus date rape, an increasingly popular charge). Instead, on the night of June 23, 1993, she walked into the kitchen of their home, picked up a large knife, marched back to their bedroom, and hacked off the penis of her sleeping husband. She then left the apartment and disposed of the penis—or her part of it—by tossing it onto

a grass-and-gravel roadside. The police found it, and two highly skilled surgeons made history by reattaching it to Bobbitt who, according to some reports, is none the worse for the experience. (He is said to be “writing a book.”) Nevertheless, she was brought to trial in Prince William County, Virginia, on the charge of maliciously wounding her husband.

Nominally the defendant, Lorena Bobbitt quickly and successfully cast herself in the role of victim, the victim of a brutish husband who subjected her to mental and sexual abuse. (“You know, I watch movies and I always thought sex, it’s like touching, holding, kissing, caressing, and he was never like that. He was never tender [even before they were married]. For me, it was rough, I guess.”) She claimed to have been in fear for her life; as her lawyer put it, it was a question of “his penis versus her life.”

Probably somewhat in doubt as to whether, even so, the jury would accept a self-defense argument—after all, the sleeping John Bobbitt was no immediate threat to her—or whether even being sexually abused would be seen to justify mayhem, Lorena testified at her trial that her mind had gone “blank” when she did the deed, that she had difficulty recalling what had happened when, afterward, she found herself holding the kitchen knife and her husband’s penis. The jury agreed; after hearing the testimony of a bevy of psychiatrists, it found her not guilty by reason of temporary insanity, and the judge sentenced her (if that is the right word) to a few months in a mental hospital.

As reported in the *Washington Post*, reaction to the verdict cut cleanly along gender lines. “Women cheered and whooped brazenly as they crowded around office televisions; men crossed their legs and made nervous jokes about sleeping on their stomachs.” Molly Yard (Fund for the Feminist Majority) was thrilled; Mike Royko (*Chicago Tribune* columnist) was disgusted. A group calling itself the National Feminist Association of Ecuador withdrew its pre-verdict threat to castrate the first hundred American men they could lay their hands on. Lynn Kefauver (Washington paralegal) said Lorena “should have been found not guilty by reason of temporary *sanity*.”

THE facts in the Menendez case are similarly well known. On August 20, 1989, Erik and Lyle Menendez, eighteen and twenty-one years of age at the time and armed with twelve-gauge shotguns, walked into their home in Beverly Hills, California, and killed their parents, forty-five-year-old José and forty-seven-year-old Kitty, who were watching television and eating ice cream at the time. José was shot five or six times, at least once in the back of the head, Kitty perhaps as many as ten times. As she lay moaning and trying to crawl away, Erik went outside to get more ammunition and, on returning,

he or Lyle put a gun directly to her face and shot her once more. The boys then collected the spent shell casings, threw them into a dumpster, hid their guns, took in a movie, returned home, and put in a call to the police, feigning hysteria and saying someone had killed their parents.

These are facts; the brothers confessed to them. Seven months later, they were arrested. But before recounting the events of their trials (they were tried together but before separate juries), it is also appropriate to set down a few more facts:

- The brothers had been involved in burglaries of houses belonging to their parents' friends, making off with about \$100,000 in money, jewelry, and other property. (Their father José came to their rescue by providing restitution, and arranging that Erik, underage at the time, would be held solely responsible so that Lyle's chances of getting into Princeton would not be jeopardized.)

- Lyle was dismissed from Princeton during his first term for cheating on an examination.

- Some twenty months prior to the murders, Erik, with the help of one Craig Cignarelli, had written a screenplay, entitled *Friends*, in which a young man kills his parents with a shotgun. (He had also won a prize as best actor while at Beverly Hills High School.)

- The brothers drove two hours to San Diego where they used a stolen driver's license to purchase the shotguns.

- After the murders, the brothers inherited perhaps as much as \$14 million, and began to spend it immediately: \$700,000 on Rolex watches and new automobiles (José Menendez had recently given Lyle an Alfa Romeo convertible for his birthday, but Lyle thought it "a piece of shit"); \$550,000 (by Lyle) as a share in a restaurant business in New Jersey; a \$990,000 deposit on a penthouse. The psychiatrists later called all this "grief shopping."

- In his confession (made to a psychiatrist, apparently in the mistaken belief that it would be privileged information), Erik also said the killings had been inspired by a film, *Billionaire Boys Club*, which involves a group of Beverly Hills boys who murder two people, including the father of one of them.

- At the trial, a former girlfriend of Lyle's, Traci Baker, testified that Kitty Menendez may have tried to poison the family; but subsequently a handwritten letter surfaced in which Lyle instructed her how to tell this story, adding, "we will decide later around what date this incident occurred."

These, too, are facts. To them it is proper to add the opinion of two close observers of the trials, Dominick Dunne (reporting for *Vanity Fair*) and the Harvard law professor, Alan Dershowitz: both concur that the brothers are "world-class liars." So good at lying, that police investigators never suspected them of the killings,

and they were not even asked to submit to a test (routine in such cases) to determine whether their hands carried residue from the shotgun blasts. So good at lying, that at their trials they escaped conviction by managing to persuade enough members of their juries that they were victims: of neglect, rejection, and every other variety of abuse to which most parents are thought routinely to subject their children, as well as of more serious forms of mistreatment, including incest, sexual molestation, and bestiality.

One of their lawyers said to the jury that the question was not *what* the brothers did, but *why* they did it. "We will prove to you it was done out of fear." In a trial lasting six months, all of it broadcast to the nation on Court-TV, the defense did indeed succeed in proving that Lyle and Erik had acted out of fear. To be more precise, they succeeded in proving this to the satisfaction of the women jurors.

On the charge of killing José Menendez, five of the six men on Erik's jury voted for first-degree murder and one for second-degree; all six women voted to acquit. On the charge of killing Kitty Menendez, only one of the seven women on Lyle's jury joined the five men by voting either for first- or second-degree murder; the other women voted guilty of one or another form of manslaughter. Hopelessly deadlocked, Lyle's jury gave up after 19 days, Erik's after 25 days, and Van Nuys Superior Court Judge Stanley M. Weisberg declared a mistrial. When the prosecution announced that it would move for a new trial, a woman alternate on Lyle's jury said, "They're not going to find a jury in our lifetime that could agree to convict them of first-degree murder." The horrible thing is, she may well be right.

**"THE ACCUSED [IS ENTITLED] TO HAVE
COMPULSORY PROCESS FOR OBTAINING WITNESSES IN HIS FAVOR."**

In the trial of Lorena Bobbitt, the jury chose to take the word of "expert" witnesses, the psychiatrists who pronounced Lorena Bobbitt insane (for the time being). Yet expert witnesses have a way with juries, as they do with judges. They are presumed to know what they are talking about, whether it is a banned book or the human psyche. And just as the book has not been written that some professor, when hired for the purpose, will not find to hold at least a modicum of "redeeming social value," so the deed has not been done that some psychiatrist, when hired for the purpose, will not be prepared to attribute to insanity.

From the psychiatrist's perspective, indeed, the question is really whether any of us is sane, or, at least, is not sometimes insane. Or, to put it in the terms favored by today's talk-show culture, the question is really whether any of us does not have *grounds* for acting insanely. Thus, 20/20, ABC News, February 4, 1994:

[Barbara] Walters: Tom, it seems that in several prominent cases recently—Lorena Bobbitt, for example—that the psychological background of the defendant becomes the basis for the plea. Is that going to be a trend?

[Tom] Jarriel: It seems to be.

Walters: I mean, everybody has a psychological background.

In addition to helping the jury find Lorena Bobbitt temporarily insane, the testimony of the expert psychiatric witnesses lent further luster to the image of her as an abused person, and (therefore) as justified in doing what she did, whatever she did. This is the “abuse excuse”—tied, in this case, to the idea of wholesale female victimization which has already done so much to poison relations between the sexes. With or without the help of the psychiatrists, it will go on doing so. The feminists will see to that.

“I call it rape,” Catherine MacKinnon, professor of law (*sic*) at the University of Michigan, has said, “whenever a woman has sex and feels violated.” Or, as we find in a quaint document from a somewhat earlier moment in the feminist movement called the SCUM MANIFESTO (required reading in a Georgetown University women’s-studies course): “The male is completely egocentric, trapped inside himself, incapable of empathizing or identifying with others, of love, friendship, affection, or tenderness. . . .” No wonder women feel that other women are justified in taking out their knives.

FOR some inexplicable reason, no “expert” appeared for the prosecution in the Menendez trial. But more than a dozen psychiatrists, sociologists, therapists, social workers, and other “experts” testified for the defense, and were well paid for doing so.

A professor with experience evaluating crime scenes for the FBI studied the photographs of the murder scene and proffered her “expert” judgment: it was so “disorganized” that the murders could not have been planned. On the contrary, she said, the wildness of the shooting indicated fear and panic resulting from a lifetime of sexual and mental abuse.

Similarly, a group of psychiatrists, psychologists, and various other professors, after interviewing Lyle and Erik in the jailhouse, testified that in their “expert” judgment the brothers were telling the truth.

One therapist cited “scientific evidence” showing that abused children suffer changes in their “brain chemistry.” (Presumably, since neither of the Menendez brothers showed any evidence of present brain damage, the chemical changes must have been reversed by the time of their trial.)

Finally, a psychology professor from Indiana University testified—on what basis was never

made clear—that Lyle had been rejected by his mother because she did not want to give birth to him.

Half the jurors apparently found all this persuasive.

“THE ACCUSED [IS ENTITLED] TO HAVE THE ASSISTANCE OF COUNSEL FOR HIS DEFENSE.”

Asked by a member of the press whether a lawyer had to believe that “the person you are defending is telling the truth,” Leslie Abramson, Erik Menendez’s chief counsel and therefore an officer of the court, said, “No you don’t. You don’t have to believe that at all. You [do] want to know whether they are or not.”

She did know that much. She must have known that Erik was not telling the truth when she exhibited a photograph of José Menendez holding his two sons, aged about four and six at the time, and asked Erik where his father’s hand was placed. The photograph, reproduced in the July 21, 1993 *New York Times*, clearly shows an affectionate father holding a smiling Erik on his right, with his left arm around Lyle’s waist, the hand appearing to rest on the boy’s belt buckle. On the stand, the well-coached Erik replied that their father’s hand was placed on Lyle’s genitals.

She could not have believed (but as she explained, she did not have to believe) the gruesome stories she elicited from Erik at the trial, week after week: stories of how, from an early age, he was forced to satisfy his father’s sexual desires. But, herself a consummate actress, she pretended to believe them. As she put it in her summing-up, José Menendez’s purpose “was to use his child’s body to satisfy his lust.” But Dominick Dunne points out that “not one of the defense witnesses, [not] even those who had reason to hate him, described José Menendez as the pervert father his sons said he was.” Menendez relatives told Dunne that “the brothers’ account of the molestation was false, gleaned from books they read in jail,” principally Paul Mones’s *When a Child Kills: Abused Children Who Kill Their Parents*.

The stories of rape and abuse were told to justify the brothers’ killing of their father, admittedly a detestable man. What about their long-suffering mother? Here the defense had something of a problem. They solved it by having poor Kitty, in real life the victim of a philandering husband, depicted as yet another monster, one who hated her sons, who seduced them when they were children, who attempted to poison them. Again, all apparent lies, and, except for the cock-and-bull story told by Traci Baker, uncorroborated by anyone else’s testimony. Like the stories about the father, they were easy to tell, since neither parent was available to rebut them.

Asked to explain why Erik, in confessing the murders to his therapist, had not said anything

about molestation, Abramson opined that to do so, "he would have had to reveal the shameful, in his opinion, secrets that he had spent most of his life concealing." A lawyer brazen enough to suggest that someone would willingly confess to having shotgunned his parents to death but be embarrassed to discuss sex with his therapist is just the sort of lawyer Erik Menendez needed. A jury prepared to believe such a lawyer was a jury prepared to believe anything.

"IT IS A GENERAL RULE . . . THAT THE EVIDENCE SHALL BE CONFINED TO THE POINT AT ISSUE."

According to the Supreme Court, in a 1990 capital-punishment case, evidence showing that a "defendant had a poor and deprived childhood, or that he had a rich and spoiled childhood, [or] that he had a great love for the victim's race, or that he had a pathological hatred for the victim's race, [or] that he has limited mental capacity, [or] that he has a brilliant mind which can make a great contribution to society, [or] that he was kind to his mother, or that he despised his mother," all such evidence concerning a defendant's character or record must be admitted and considered—at the *sentencing* stage. But not at the trial stage.

Leslie Abramson and Jill Lansing (Lyle Menendez's lawyer) succeeded in getting this evidence introduced at the trial stage, where the "point at issue" was one of guilt or innocence, i.e., whether Erik and Lyle Menendez murdered their parents. They managed this by claiming self-defense; to support that claim, they were allowed to introduce evidence of child abuse which allegedly had begun at an early age and continued up until a week before the murder.

Now, the criminal law allows a person to use deadly force only when he reasonably believes that he is facing imminent death or serious bodily harm; but, just as Lorena Bobbitt was not facing imminent death from her sleeping husband, so, on the basis of all the evidence presented in their trials, Erik and Lyle Menendez cannot reasonably be said to have faced imminent death at the hands of their father. They were strong, agile, young men—Erik was a near world-class tennis player—free to come and go as they pleased, and they did not suffer from a shortage of cash. On the contrary, they had free use of their parents' credit cards; their father bailed them out of trouble, employed a \$60,000-a-year tennis coach for Erik, and was determined to get him into Princeton.

True, José Menendez had reason to be fed up with his sons, and may finally have come to the conclusion that he had given them too much. He mentioned to his executor that he was thinking of cutting them out of his will. (Did the broth-

ers, perhaps, learn of this?) But there was no evidence that he intended, or had reason, to kill *them*. Indeed, it was only on the eve of the trial, three years after they had been arrested, that Leslie Abramson announced to the press that the brothers intended to claim self-defense, that they had killed "because they were in fear for their lives."

Remarkably, in his charge to the juries, Judge Weisberg refused to give the self-defense instruction; in fact, he said that even if the brothers' stories were true, that still would not justify the carefully planned murders, and the juries would have to convict them of at least involuntary manslaughter. Why, then, if they were not to be permitted to deliver a verdict of justifiable homicide—which is to say, a verdict of not guilty on grounds of self-defense—were the jurors allowed to hear all the testimony bearing *only* on self-defense? And why did this same judge forbid the prosecution to introduce Erik's screenplay, or the film *Billionaire Boys Club*, or the tape of the confession made to the psychiatrist?

The judge's reasons for these actions were, to say the least, unclear. But he did so act, and the consequence was that half the members of the jury in effect voted contrary to his instructions.

IT TAKES only one member to "hang" a jury, and in the Menendez trial, to paraphrase the last line of George Orwell's *1984*, most of the women jurors had come to love the little brothers or, at a minimum, to pity them. "I don't think Lyle is a threat to society," one of them said. "If he lived across the street from me, I wouldn't be afraid." Women spectators in the courtroom felt the same way. "I believe in them," said one, "and I wanted to stand alongside them."

What they really "believe in," however, is the gospel according to Oprah Winfrey, Phil Donahue, Sally Jesse Raphael, and Montel Williams: that "everybody has a psychology," and everybody is a victim. Lorena Bobbitt was a victim of sex abuse, Lyle and Erik Menendez of child abuse. (Even Hitler, we are now told, was abused as a child.) From this perspective, the real criminals are not the sociopaths like Erik and Lyle Menendez but the rest of us—those (to quote the columnist Charles Krauthammer) "who carry the mask of sanity, the middle classes living on their cozy suburban streets, abusing their children, violating their women, and harboring deep inside them the most unholy thoughts."

So jurors—with the connivance of lawyers, judges, and "expert" witnesses—refuse to convict Lorena Bobbitt, or the Menendez brothers (after all, they only killed two people so far), and a national audience cheers. Woe to the criminal-justice system that travels down this perverse and awful path.

Tales of Virtue

James Q. Wilson

THE success of William J. Bennett's admirable anthology of moral tales, *The Book of Virtues**—which has become a major best-seller—is both heartening and puzzling: heartening because we want to think that people hunger for literature that teaches virtue, puzzling because it is not obvious why literature might have that effect.

Almost every account we have from psychologists of the moral development of the child emphasizes reinforcements and imitation. Children acquire rules of conduct by having compliance with those rules rewarded and violations punished and by observing and imitating the behavior of their parents and friends.

We are, however, neither rewarded nor punished in any palpable sense by stories about imaginary people. We may wish to imitate a fictional character who succeeds, but why should we identify with one who suffers? Bennett's answer to this question is that such stories create "moral literacy": they supply examples that tell readers how to recognize the virtues in the practical world, and they "help anchor our children in their culture," a world of "shared ideals." I believe he is correct, but his answer is open to several objections from skeptics.

To begin with, strict behaviorists will argue that children no more acquire moral habits from moral literature than they acquire athletic ability from reading the sports pages or musical ability from listening to songs. Living according to certain rules requires a certain biological endowment developed through the same experiences by which we learn to field a ground ball or play the violin—practice, practice, practice.

For their part, cultural relativists—or, as they currently fashion themselves, postmodernists—will claim that there is no culture of shared ideals, but only many competing cultures (or "interpretive communities"). Each has its own ideals, unique to its culture. It may be nice to acquaint children with their culture, but we should not imagine that there is anything fundamentally moral about it.

Finally, some philosophers and theologians will suggest that, while there are universal moral standards, moral stories obscure them precisely because they "anchor our children in their culture." These stories are always about people like the people who read them. Rarely do the stories instruct white children to be fair to black ones, or Gentiles to help Jews, or Apaches to welcome the Navaho. And many of the most compelling stories are about courage, as if courage were praiseworthy apart from the cause for which one takes great risks. There may have been brave guards at Auschwitz or heroic Serbs shelling Sarajevo, but they do not deserve our admiration. An important variant of this objection will be the pacifist one: stories glorifying courage in battle inevitably glorify battle, and violence is wrong.

People who raise questions such as these will, I conjecture, be less likely to buy Bennett's book than will people who accept his assumptions unhesitatingly, which means that it is probably enjoying better sales outside of university towns than in them. If I am correct, this tells us something about moral stories and even more about people who are drawn to universities.

WHATEVER strict behaviorists may say, moral tales must play some important role in human life because every culture has them. Bennett includes stories from the Apache, spirituals sung by African-American slaves, and of course many of Aesop's fables. Greek literature began with the telling and retelling of the story of Ulysses, and the biblical stories of Ruth and Naomi, of David and Goliath, and of the travails of Job were spoken long before they were written. It is impossible to conceive of a society that does not have and preserve a legacy of stories. Humans need to explain, justify, and instruct.

Moral tales can affect us in three ways: by conveying a message, awakening a sentiment, or enlarging the universe. The most common message is one of consequence: good things happen to people who are good, bad things to people who are bad. This is the earliest form of learning and the most persistent and important one. It domi-

JAMES Q. WILSON, a frequent contributor, is professor of management and public policy at UCLA. His most recent book is *The Moral Sense*.

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nates the lives of very small children and affects importantly the lives of everyone else. In Bennett's anthology most of the stories about consequences are stories written for children.

Thus, Robert Louis Stevenson cautions youngsters that "cruel children, and crying babies, all grow up as geese and gabies"; Hilaire Belloc tells them of Rebecca who died because of her annoying habit of slamming doors, and of Jim who ran away from his nurse and was eaten by a lion; Aesop warns them that greed can cause us to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. The Three Little Kittens did not get any pie until they had found their mittens; St. George inherited a kingdom as a reward for having slain the dragon; and Walter Raleigh acquired a knighthood in exchange for having spread his cloak for Queen Elizabeth. The Little Red Hen got to eat the bread she baked; the dog, cat, and pig who refused to help had to go without. And of course the ants survived the winter owing to their foresight while the grasshopper perished owing to his inability to defer gratification.

Some may wonder whether these tales should be called "moral" at all. They are at best about prudence, at worst about calculation. Moral action, in this conception, must be about hard choices and personal sacrifice. One is reminded of Immanuel Kant's argument that moral action must be the result of pure reason: you can only be said to have acted morally if you can honestly declare that you didn't enjoy a minute of it.

But this conception is mistaken. Acting morally often requires us to calculate in the sense of taking the long rather than the short view. And Aristotle counted prudence as a virtue—not, to be sure, as high a one as justice or even friendship, but a virtue nonetheless.

Prudence involves self-command or self-discipline, which is the subject of the first section of Bennett's book of readings. As adults we may regard the story of the Three Little Kittens or of the Red Hen as childish and that of the little girl who died from the habit of slamming doors as cruel. But these stories, whether childish or cruel, portray the first steps that everyone must take toward the larger and more difficult problems of self-command: controlling our greed, learning what is good for us in the long run, avoiding the temptations of addictive substances, and remaining faithful to our principles even when another course would be more popular. Morality is not the enemy of utility, but its ally; it converts self-interest into enlightened self-interest or, as Tocqueville put it, self-interest rightly understood. Self-command is about growing up and becoming mature.

SOME people never become mature. They remain childish in an especially impoverished sense—not only do they sub-

ject all their actions to the calculus of narrow self-interest, but they do so without the trusting innocence of the small child. The section on self-discipline ends with selections on this topic that are very adult. In an excerpt from the Platonic dialogue, the *Gorgias*, Socrates explains to Callicles why a temperate life is a surer route to happiness than a self-indulgent one. There is no true happiness to be found in the pursuit of immediate pleasures, for our wants are endless but our means are limited. Aristotle says much the same thing with his famous doctrine of the mean, and he goes on to praise Pericles for having had the ability to manage a household or a state based on practical wisdom about what was good for himself and for others. In Ecclesiastes the Bible says it poetically: "For every thing there is a season."

Adults who are purely consequentialist are not simply childlike, they are, in the extreme case, antisocial and even criminal. In fact, a leading characteristic of those children who are likely to become delinquent is a heightened degree of impulsivity that they are unable to outgrow.

Since the wholly impulsive person never can find sufficient resources with which to satisfy his impulses, he can never be satisfied and thus can never be happy. And since impulsive action leads to unpredictable consequences, such a person can never learn to govern his behavior on the basis of the consequences: what happens to him seems almost random. It is a feature of many criminals and gang members that they feel themselves to be governed by external, unfathomable forces—"luck"—and so they ascribe the good fortune of others to their good luck. This, of course, justifies the criminal in taking things from people with "good luck": since nothing was earned, they believe, nothing is deserved.

Moral stories about the practical consequences of our actions are vivid and memorable ways of teaching about consequences. A child soon learns that to touch a hot stove means to get burned, but it is harder to learn that failing to work means no wages and failing to control one's appetites means later discomfort.

Moral stories, however, are not all consequentialist. Some evoke our sentiments on behalf of people who have endured great hardship or won great triumphs in circumstances we can never be in ourselves. And even when we can imagine ourselves being faced with similar challenges, we do not take these stories as merely prudent guides to right conduct.

Indeed, I believe it would be impossible to read through Bennett's collection without experiencing on many pages the deepest emotions. Hans Christian Andersen's tale of the poor little girl who freezes to death while lighting matches to keep herself warm, all the while seeing transcendently lovely sights of Christmas and her grandmother; Leo Tolstoy's story of the cobbler who

discovers the virtues of compassion; Walt Whitman's lament ("O Captain! My Captain!") on the death of Lincoln; the frightful story of the fate of the Donner party; the New Testament account of the betrayal of Jesus by Judas; Homer's portrayal of the fidelity of Penelope to her husband, Ulysses, and his triumphal return; Nathan Hale's memorable words at the time of his execution; the lyrics of Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic"—some or all of these stories and poems will affect the soul of everyone who has a soul.

BUT why do we feel such sentiments? Whence the emotion that supplies sentimental reinforcement for moral tales? It is partly our capacity to imagine ourselves in the situation of others: we can conceive of the horror we would feel were we a member of the Donner party trapped in mountain snows; we can summon up the anguish we would experience if for years we heard nothing from a spouse who had gone to fight a war in a distant land. Adam Smith made this capacity for imagining the misery of others the source of our moral sentiments.

Sometimes the capacity to feel as others must have felt can be evoked simply by a news account. If we learn that an infant has died of exposure, and we have an infant, we easily imagine the grief that we would experience had it been our child, and not a stranger's, that had perished so tragically. But mere accounts of most tragedies are rarely sufficient to produce in us more than a momentary emotion, and that is likely to be a fleeting sense of relief that we were spared. Adam Smith recognized as much when he noted that a news report of the death of 100 million Chinese would cause a man in Europe to reflect but briefly and without deep emotion on the precariousness of human life.

It is different with the accounts (all included in Bennett's book) of the Spartans at Thermopylae, Horatio at the bridge, Barbara Frietchie confronting Stonewall Jackson, Admiral James Stockdale in a Vietnamese prison, or Father Maximilian Kolbe who volunteered to die in an Auschwitz starvation bunker in place of a Jew who had a wife and children. What is conveyed by these accounts is not merely news, but a *story*: a compelling narration that by art and artifice engages our sentiments and makes us feel deeply about people, even those in circumstances that are utterly foreign to us. Moral stories have an effect precisely because they are stories—that is, because they are capable of evoking feelings of awe, despair, triumph, and anxiety. Science and journalism can convey practical wisdom but they cannot, unless they partake to some degree of art, stir our passions.

Among the passions that a story can evoke is admiration for courage and a noble spirit. I con-

fess that I do not fully understand the source of the approbation we give to nobility, but I believe that its appearance in our own development marks the point where we cease to be mere calculators. A few of us never cease being that; upon reading these stories, such people will either ask what Horatio, Frietchie, Stockdale, and Kolbe "got out of it" or dismiss them as "suckers."

Human society would be impossible were that reaction commonplace. Happily, most of us are not cynics. We respect men and women of honor, often with little regard for the cause for which they were prepared to sacrifice themselves: even an Etruscan can admire Horatio's defense of a Roman bridge, even a Confederate can respect Frietchie's proud display of a Union flag, and perhaps even a North Vietnamese can appreciate Stockdale's stubborn defiance of his captors. It is not important to know whether the invasion of France by Henry V was a just or unjust war in order to thrill to his magnificent speech to his soldiers before the battle at Agincourt.

Our admiration for courage and nobility is not personally useful; when facing danger, the only "useful" thing to do is run. Our mutual admiration for courage is, in part, what *prevents* us from running. (Henry V may have been trying to reawaken that social constraint among his yeomen so as to steel them against the charge of the French knights.)

Now this may have a larger social value: in battle, the greatest casualties are suffered by the side that breaks and runs. Most of the deaths in many of the most fearsome struggles occur after the losing side has begun to retreat. And yet admiration for courage cannot be simply a social value, for though courage helps maintain the solidarity of our own ranks, we also admire it, up to a point, in the ranks of the enemy. Many British pilots valued the daring and skill of some of their German opponents in World War II, and vice versa. The courage we admire in an adversary is the kind that bespeaks not only an ability to overcome fear but a respect for a code of honor: fight hard, ask no quarter, but do not willfully kill an innocent party or a soldier who has surrendered. We distinguish between courage and sadism.

ALL the moral sentiments that are awakened by tales of courage, nobility, loyalty, and perseverance presuppose, I think, a shared sense of honor. It is less necessary that we judge the cause served by the brave or noble person to be right than that we judge his behavior *under the circumstances* to be honorable. We even distinguish between degrees of honor among criminals. No one can justify the world of *The Godfather*, but we still prefer Don Corleone to Don Barzini.

"Honor" is a word that has fallen on hard

times. For millennia the highest compliment that could be paid to a person was to say he was honorable. Today, in much of Western culture, we dismiss the desire for honor as nothing but a thirst for glory, especially (and worst of all) military glory. We regard the quest for honor as backward, even reactionary, and often militaristic; the word is associated with feudalism and warrior cultures. As a result, it is hard for the contemporary mind to find in the saga of Ulysses (or Sir Galahad, or Beowulf) what centuries of our predecessors found there: the thrill of men seeking the highest esteem of their compatriots in supreme tests of courage and perseverance. We would rather our heroes today be sensitive.

We have, then, changed, but perhaps less than we suppose, as the continued popularity—in video rentals and television reruns—of movies about heroes testifies. Educated people often dismiss John Wayne, Gary Cooper, and Clint Eastwood as amusing but one-dimensional, overly violent, and politically backward heroes. We try to persuade ourselves that we prefer Alan Alda. But the hero drama persists: it appeals to something deep inside us; and we seem no more able to articulate what we find so compelling about it than are the heroes themselves.

If Bennett had been able to include a video component in his book, I would have urged upon him the scene in *High Noon* when Gary Cooper tries, not very well, to explain to Grace Kelly why he must stay and fight when no one—not she, not the townspeople—wants him to. Cooper cannot, any more than Wayne or Eastwood or the rest of us, give a philosophically sophisticated account of honor, but we know it when we see it. And so does all the world.

The chief complaint the modern mind has directed at the people and societies that have elevated honor to a high level is that, besides being violent, they are parochial. We may to some extent admire the hero who fights against us, but we give much greater esteem to the hero who fights for us. How you felt about Pickett's charge at Gettysburg depended importantly on whether you were a Confederate or a Unionist. The Charge of the Light Brigade had a different meaning for a Briton than a Russian. Courage, duty, loyalty: these are to an important degree parochial virtues. They do not lend themselves to becoming universal principles. Kant may have shown that lying can never be moral because we cannot universalize the rule, "always lie," but he cannot by the same means show that cowardice can never be moral. We can easily imagine preferring a world in which we are always brave and our adversaries always craven.

OF THE ten virtues around which Bennett's compilation is organized, at least five are valued more greatly among

friends and countrymen than among strangers: compassion, responsibility, friendship, courage, and loyalty. We think well of strangers who display compassion, are decent toward their friends, and accept responsibility, and we express perfunctory admiration of a foreign hero, but we attach much greater importance to these qualities among kith and kin. The closer we are, emotionally and socially, to another person, the greater the importance we attach to compassion and loyalty and friendship. As we draw more tightly the ties that bind us to our friends and families, we exclude people who are neither friends nor family. These virtues are, to an important degree, boundary-maintaining: that is, they operate by making us attach greater value to a "we" and a lesser value to a "they."

Four other of Bennett's ten virtues—self-discipline, work, perseverance, and honesty—we admire in all who display them, in large part because such qualities are useful to us. It is convenient to encounter in a foreign city someone to repair our automobile who is diligent, reliable, and honest. The tenth, faith, we may or may not admire universally, depending on who believes what.

In modern times, the greatest challenge to any conception of virtue is to find a basis for the proper recognition and treatment of strangers. We—that is, Westerners who have accepted the Enlightenment view that all men are entitled, at some fundamental level, to equal respect—want to give a principled account of our obligation to others. That is what liberalism, properly defined, is about: granting to all men and women the status once reserved only for free men in one's own community. The effort to do this has been largely based on providing a new interpretation of the idea of justice. If justice means giving to every person his due, we have to find a way of defining what is due.

That is not an easy task. To judge from the stories gathered in Bennett's book, it is not a task for which we can get much help among the tales, poems, legends, and homilies of our or any other culture. In fact, Bennett does not even have a section entitled "Justice," though he includes some important accounts of it, such as the excerpt from Plato's *Republic*. One might also put under this heading the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin as a cautionary tale about what might happen when you violate one command of justice—namely, to pay your debts even to total strangers. (If you have forgotten, in the case of the village of Hamelin you lose all your children.)

I do not think the omission of a large selection of stories about justice is an oversight on Bennett's part. Justice among strangers has rarely been the object of stories that have acquired a lasting, emotional hold on our memories. Moral stories are, for the most part, family stories. Chil-

dren are taught by these stories to be wary of strangers, since strangers are often a threat to them.

The Grimm brothers made this the theme of many of their familiar tales. In one, it becomes clear why mice should never set up housekeeping with cats even when the cats make pretty speeches to them. In another, Hansel and Gretel learn to be wary of old women living in the woods who offer to feed them; the reader is taught that brothers and sisters must rely on one another, and never on strangers or even, in this case, on their own parents. Of course, some strangers are better than others, such as the frog that turns into a handsome prince. But the ugly frog never was a threat to the beautiful princess; it did her a favor and all she had to do in return was grant a small reciprocal favor, one for which she was hugely rewarded.

If on closer inspection a stranger turns out to be an honest and needy person, then these tales teach that we ought to extend to him our compassion. People who are relentlessly selfish and cruel even in the face of innocence are punished, as was Scrooge by the sight of Marley's Ghost in *A Christmas Carol*. But Dickens's story, like most stories of how one is to treat others, is not about justice, it is about ordinary decency. If Tiny Tim and Bob Cratchit had not been such utterly lovable and innocent persons but instead rather unpleasant and burdensome neighbors,

Scrooge's conversion might be said to have involved an awakened sense of justice rather than the restoration of a forgotten sense of common kindness.

THE chief reason, in my view, why Bennett does not include a section on justice is that the sense of justice cannot be adequately conveyed by stories. *Justice requires an argument*, an argument that makes us see beyond our immediate circle of family and friends and nation. There have been moral tales about courage and honor and friendship since the beginning of time, but there have only been moral arguments about justice since a handful of ancient Greeks began asking these questions a few centuries ago.

Perhaps the two most important examples of appeals to justice in Bennett's book are Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speech, "I Have a Dream," and Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. Both are moving and important, but neither is a story. They are arguments, as is the account of the refusal of Rosa Parks to yield her bus seat to a white man. I hope William Bennett makes it his next literary task to devote a whole volume to such arguments. But I predict that such a book will not, like this one, become a best-seller. That will be a commercial confirmation of how much harder it is to devise universal rules than to reawaken universal sentiments.

Losing China Again

Charles Horner

DURING 1993, visitors to China began to notice the widespread appearance of trinkets, souvenirs, and other memorabilia of this century's most prominent Chinese leader, Mao Zedong (1893-1976). Though they were struck by something festive in the phenomenon, there was also speculation about darker implications. In particular, people remembered how portraits of Stalin began to pop up as the Soviet Union disintegrated, and how those were interpreted as nostalgic longing for iron-fisted good order, as an escape from freedom.

But China was not disintegrating; on the contrary, it was getting richer by the day. By some reckonings its open-market economy had become the third largest in the world, and businessmen everywhere were jostling to participate in its expansion. In 1993 alone, the Chinese government had approved almost 100,000 foreign-financed projects, representing commitments of some \$110 billion *in toto*. The United States and China by themselves did about \$30 billion in trade—\$10 billion more than the preceding year. And there were other tabulations to show that, throughout the world, industrialists and financiers had been seized by a powerful Sinomania.

All this had resulted from decisions by China's government to allow capitalism an unprecedented sway throughout the country. Yet here was the same government planning and then putting on an old-style Communist spectacle for December 26, 1993, the 100th anniversary of Mao's birth, complete with the long-winded speeches, the giant portraits, and the almost forgotten phrases of Mao's own day. And after the ceremonies in the once-renowned Great Hall of the People in central Beijing, various dignitaries walked past Mao's embalmed body, still on Lenin-like display in a mausoleum at Tiananmen square.

For all this, however, there is little Maoism in today's China. Indeed, almost immediately upon Mao's death in 1976, his successors began to undo his work. In short order, his closest associates—to be immortalized as the "Gang of Four"—were neutralized, and his fearsome wife, Jiang Qing,

later received a show trial. Not only that, but by 1977, the previously twice-purged Deng Xiaoping had returned from internal exile to become paramount leader. As against the imperial Mao, Deng strove to be taken for an ordinary bourgeois—a family man dandling his grandchildren, a bridge player, and even an audiophile with an expensive pair of high-end speakers for his home stereo system. But more importantly, Deng came armed with a plan for "four modernizations" and an "opening to the world" which has been at work full force ever since, and with spectacular success.

Moreover, it was as if the centenary celebrations were another way of marking the decline in Mao's historical standing, for both inside and outside the country there was no longer any denial that his reign had been marked by great failures and even greater atrocities. Everyone now acknowledged that one of his early inspirations, the "great leap forward" of the 1950's, had so battered rural areas that the ensuing famine eventually claimed as many as 30 million lives. The "great proletarian cultural revolution," which proceeded in fits and starts in the decade prior to his death, was also now universally recognized to have been profoundly destructive. And as much as Mao had labored to become larger than life, in death he was becoming fodder for the tabloids. There were salacious accounts of the sexual adventures of his dotage, with more promised in the forthcoming memoirs of his long-time personal physician.

If Mao can be regarded as in some sense the last of the Chinese emperors, the posthumous pomp of his centenary was also devilishly exquisite in highlighting the country's positive reversal of fortune since his death. In nearby Japan, by contrast, there is still a very-much-alive emperor, and he traditionally greets his subjects on New Year's Day, as Akihito did on January 1, 1994. However, in Tokyo, unlike in Beijing, the end-of-the-year wrap-up was downbeat.

Japan, it was reported, was confronting "an awesome debacle." The country's financial system was threatened by losses in stock and property values of at least \$6 trillion, losses which made the \$350 billion squandered during America's savings-and-loan fiasco seem like spare change.

CHARLES HORNER is president of the Madison Center in Washington, D.C. His article, "China on Our Minds," appeared in January, and he also contributed "China on the Rise" to our December 1992 issue.

The rising sun was beclouded and the economic miracle had ended. The vaunted Japanese bureaucrats had seriously bungled, and they now seemed far less intimidating—no longer the relentless policy-makers the world had been urged to emulate. Japan was descending into gloom and depression but, from the Chinese perspective, the turnaround was altogether natural. For centuries, they had disdained the Japanese and had especially resented them for becoming China's principal tormentor throughout the 20th century. Japan's defeat in 1945 had been a proper comeuppance; now, the prospect that Japan's postwar economic hegemony might also be waning was deeply satisfying to Chinese rulers old enough to remember Tokyo's past affronts. In the meantime China, as *Newsweek* put it, had become "the straw that stirs the Asian drink," and Boeing's largest customer to boot.

ALL these developments of the past fifteen years have revived old expectations. In the early 1950's, the "loss of China" became an emotional political issue in the United States. The establishment of a Communist regime in the world's most populous country—one which many Americans had assumed, in the 1940's, was somehow amenable to democracy, free enterprise, and even Protestantism—came as a great surprise, made ominous by the new China's alliance with the Soviet Union, and its increasingly bellicose stance toward the outer world. In addition to the bloody combat between the U.S. and China in the Korean war, there was the prospect of further Sino-American conflict over Taiwan and Indochina, and many other crises of greater or lesser severity—the Sino-Indian war of 1962, or Chinese ties to "national-liberation" movements in various places.

On the other hand, China's relations with the Soviet Union were deteriorating at an even faster rate, making possible a Sino-American diplomatic rapprochement in the early 1970's that went on to outlive the Soviet Union, which was its target. To the extent, then, that China had been "lost" in a strategic sense, it appeared to have been found again in only two decades.

Of course, China was still a Communist country and the Chinese were still convinced that their adoption of Communism had catapulted them out of their backwardness. But today the preferred way of 40 years ago is all but defunct in China, as it is defunct everywhere that matters. Far from placing a nation in the vanguard, Communism has become synonymous with the very condition of backwardness China still strives to overcome. It can certainly no longer serve as the foundation for a governing ideology; as the political scientists like to say, Chinese Communism has lost its legitimacy, or, as the Chinese themselves used to say, it has lost the mandate of heaven.

In this respect, the condition of the Communist-inspired system in China is not so very different from that of the last imperial dynasty in the late 19th century. Everyone knew that its days were numbered, though no one could forecast the precise day of its demise; it might take a decade or a century, but much as the dynasty might wiggle, squirm, and try to delay the inevitable, its doom was certain.

This sentiment, we may remember, was especially pronounced in 1989, at the height of China's democracy movement. The interest among China's best and brightest in Western parliamentarianism and human rights had reached unprecedented heights, and the recovery of China for Western-derived political values and institutions seemed at hand. In the grand sense, this would complete the process which had begun twenty years earlier with China's reintegration into the West's worldwide security system, and which had been followed by China's decision to become part of the West's worldwide trade and investment system. Even the now-famous Tiananmen massacre could be seen as mainly a temporary setback, not a strategic defeat. The window of opportunity opened by the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war seemed larger than ever.

YET now, less than five years later, these dynamics seem to be changing once again, and we may soon have cause to wonder about the loss of China for yet a second time in half a century.

Thus, Adrian Karatnycky, who coordinated this past year's Comparative Study of Freedom for Freedom House, reports that "the period of rapid democratic gains occasioned by the collapse of Soviet Communism appears to have ended," and that the "democratic renaissance that began in 1989" has of late suffered a dramatic blow. He notes how some repressive states—China among them—continue to get richer and more powerful and are therefore able to exert greater influence in what is becoming a strategic and philosophical global vacuum. What is perhaps more instructive is that many of these states have decided that their successes entitle—or at least enable—them to answer back against Western charges in the field of human rights. Money talks.

Last June, for example, the United Nations convened a World Conference on Human Rights, the first such it had sponsored since 1968. The Western representatives, expecting little more than to conduct ideological mopping-up operations in the wake of Communism's demise, were taken aback by the intensity of the resistance mounted by some traditional, albeit newly prosperous, states. China and Indonesia, not otherwise philosophical soulmates, were especially forceful in asserting the autonomy of their beliefs and practices.

Obviously, the Chinese do not wish to be called to account even before so weak a bar as the court of "world opinion." And even though they sometimes make concessions on human rights on a case-by-case basis, sufficient to deflect American pressures connected with trade policy, such ad-hoc accommodations are essentially "humanitarian," and do not imply an acceptance of our political principles.

Indeed, highly publicized agreements which purport to make the Chinese legal and penal systems more open to outside inspection can no doubt ameliorate harsh conditions of confinement for courageous political dissenters and may even cause the government to think twice before it moves against others. But such agreements are rooted in expediency on both sides. From the American point of view, some human rights are more politically correct than others: the Clinton administration has argued in federal court that Chinese seeking asylum here to escape forced sterilization at home should be deported; the Bush administration had favored the granting of asylum in such cases. And on the Chinese side, Beijing's occasional "flexibility" derives more from working the abacus than from any real change of heart.

The Chinese are apt to persist in doing their sums and in skillfully deflecting American entreaties as it becomes increasingly apparent that our heart is not much in it, either—precisely because we follow the same arithmetic. For example, one influential Senate Democrat has said that if the President were to make good on his threat to withdraw China's trade benefits, it would be tantamount to dropping the economic and political equivalent of a nuclear bomb. As interpreted by the *New York Times*, this statement reflects a "new consensus . . . among Democrats." The idea is to secure Chinese cooperation—please, just this once, as it were—in return for our scrapping, "once and for all, the annual threat to withdraw preferred-trading status on the basis of China's human-rights record . . . [because] trade with China is now so economically important that . . . if Washington ever actually had to carry out its sanctions threat, the effects would be disastrous for both American business and Chinese reform." For America, about 180,000 jobs could be at stake.

For the Chinese, and beyond their workaday sense of how we now make our commercial and diplomatic calculations, there is also something deeper at work, even among those very closely identified with liberalization. Li Xianglu was a close adviser to Zhao Ziyang, China's reform-minded Prime Minister who openly sympathized with the Tiananmen protesters—for which he was placed under house arrest after the crackdown. Nevertheless Li, now in the United States, believes that there are viable, and indeed humane, alternatives to Western liberalism. In particular,

an economically successful China could, he thinks, pose an "alternative world view to American-style liberalism, especially because it will be aided by the fact that the East Asian countries all share a common value system."

Moreover, the case made by advocates of democracy, that it invariably promotes prosperity, is also under critical scrutiny. Professor Robert Barro of Harvard has assembled an array of data purporting to show, as he puts it, that "democracy has, at best, a mixed record as a contributor to improved standards of living," and that "the average effect of more democracy on economic growth is roughly zero."

Flourishing democracies, Barro argues, create powerful interest groups which generate policies that favor themselves but hamper economic growth overall. He compares China, with its "regime of political oppression and gradual economic liberalization" and its economic successes, with Russia, whose "sudden move to democracy" has not been rewarded with similar successes. And he concludes that "our pressure for enhanced political freedom in China may therefore be self-serving, but may not improve life for the Chinese people."

No doubt, the embrace of these points by the Chinese has its own self-serving aspect. But their real significance is that they reinforce the traditional Confucian critique of the West's unrestrained individualism and of how that individualism produces bad results for society as a whole.

Besides, the case that any Chinese can make for Western-style liberties inside his own country immediately encounters the visible evidence of the West's own civic decay and social pathology. If a nation can attain wealth and power and yet minimize its vulnerability to social instability and moral decadence, why take unnecessary risks?

FOR almost two centuries, intellectual and cultural commerce between China and the West has been seen as exclusively a seller's market. The products were of Western origin and the customer was invited to choose among socialism, Christianity, scientism, republicanism, existentialism, Marxism, social Darwinism, constitutional monarchism, Freudianism, vitalism, anarcho-syndicalism, pragmatism, hedonism—or any combination thereof. China's confidence in itself was so shaken that the country's older thinking was almost buried in ongoing debate about differing Western doctrines.

Yet there was also a lingering interest in searching for those things in China's own vast experience which might be mobilized in the nation's behalf. After all, Chinese culture had influenced more people, over a larger area, for a longer period, than anything else in the history of world. Its ancient classics held sway for millennia. For but one example, China's "neo-Confucian" consensus, formulated about 1200 C.E., dominated

political thought not only in China itself but in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam for the next several centuries. And Chinese achievements in every other realm of human endeavor were substantial and enduring.

So even in the early decades of this century, when China's problems continued apace, some Chinese still believed that there remained something in their cultural inheritance that might redeem the country, or perhaps unite with things Western to produce a new amalgamated world civilization; or that Chinese civilization's own presumed immutable, universal, and eternal truths might just win out in the end—that China would not be Westernized, but rather that the whole world would be Sinified.

This ambition is now gathering force once again, as China's formidable people become more and more involved in world intellectual and cultural life. Isolated for a long time now, first behind a screen of Confucian incomprehension, then behind a "bamboo curtain" of Maoist totalitarianism, the proverbial one-fourth of mankind has more than its fair share of smart people—if past history and present MIT enrollments are to be believed. And they are less and less inclined to try out Western-derived solutions to their problems. On the contrary, freed from the requirement to see their past as nothing but a preparation for Communism, they can now reclaim the riches of their own history as they search for new ways of living in the modern world. This process will certainly affect us in the West as well, and may even change our own sense of things.

A semblance of the new balance of intellectual and cultural trade is already discernible. Andrew Solomon draws the outlines of it in a lengthy and important discussion in the *New York Times Magazine* of China's exuberant artistic avant-garde. According to Solomon, these artists use Western styles, but for ends of their own. He also reports that, among these seeming subversives, there is an "ambivalent but incontrovertible" love for Chairman Mao because, as one of them puts it, "misguided idealism is better than no idealism at all." Solomon is surprised when a performance artist—and a man imprisoned for leading pro-democracy demonstrations—tells him that his friends "are nostalgic for the Cultural Revolution because it was so Chinese . . . [and] that no one at Tiananmen was interested in or understood the principle of free elections."

The ambivalence inherent in Chinese aping of Western artistic styles seems to crop up everywhere: imitation and rejection of the West are, in the best Chinese fashion, one and the same thing. The Western style reigns as a matter of chance, something these Chinese learned because they

were born into a world wherein the West was at its zenith. But, as one explains, "the West is in a state of decline and China in a state of ascendancy." Western modernism, he thinks, may be the international language of art, but it is dominant in China only because of the current—and not necessarily permanent—international balance of political and economic power. In any event, it is far from obvious that the efforts of the Chinese avant-garde have as their objective the establishment of an American-style democracy.

AFTER Mao proclaimed the People's Republic of China in 1949 and the United States decided to withhold diplomatic recognition, it fell to Dean Rusk to explain why. It was Rusk's misfortune to be Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs at that time, as it was his fate to be Secretary of State during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, that is, during the Vietnam war. Rusk called the new Communist regime "a Slavic Manchukuo on a colossal scale." It was not, he said, the government of China, for it could not meet the first test: it was not Chinese.

At one time, Chinese Communism surely did mean an expansion of Soviet influence, but that did not last long and, besides, it never turned the Chinese into Russians. Similarly, China's course these past dozen years has certainly marked an expansion of American influence, and that will continue for a while also. But that influence has already peaked and it has not, in any event, turned the Chinese into Americans; instead, it is now quietly bruited that it may turn the Chinese against Americans.

Indeed, even though we know little about current Chinese strategic thinking, American strategic analysis of the highest order has now begun to sense the stirrings of a coming Sino-American contest, probably not for world dominance, but more likely for paramountcy in Asia. To be sure, the sounds of this contest are still but the faint harmony to the far louder melody of commerce and capitalism, but they can be heard from time to time: the Chinese are hiring dispossessed Russian weapons experts; the Chinese are buying ballistic-missile technology; the Chinese are abandoning territorial defense and equipping their forces for power-projection; the Chinese are still profoundly mistrustful of the United States.

These are, as they say, looming prospects and, given another decade or two, could become ugly ones. In that case, we will once again ask who lost China, wondering how it was that the ever-inscrutable Chinese could have become more like us and yet more like themselves at one and the same time.

Mr. Larkin Gets a Life

Joseph Epstein

"Get a life!"
—CONTEMPORARY SAYING

"Really, one should burn everything."
—PHILIP LARKIN, March 15, 1980

IN A LETTER written in 1953, when he was thirty-one years old, Philip Larkin remarked that the three poets who had "altered the face" of English poetry in the 20th century were T. S. Eliot, W. H. Auden, and Dylan Thomas. He could not have known it then, but he was himself to be the fourth.

In a small number of perfect poems, Larkin (who died in 1985 at the age of sixty-three) has left a permanent impress, creating a distinctive mood—the "Larkinesque"—and a compact world. That world is dark—gray, if a color be wanted. It is a middle-class world, bland and provincial, drab, and (in his own bachelor case) lonely. It is a world in which childhood is likely to have been "a forgotten boredom," life is a game of cards (where we "hold poor hands/ when we face each other honestly"), time passes too quickly, and death, far and away the major datum, casts a pall over everything.

If this sounds pretty grim, it is, except that, set out in Larkin's poetry with wit, precision, and an exceptionally high quotient of truthfulness, it leaves one, surprisingly, elated. In an unbardic age, Philip Larkin's poems, lucid, accessible, eliminating all false notes, dedicated to snuffing out arty pomposity, seem more genuine than those of any other poet writing in the past 50 years.

EVEN the best of poets, when young, tend to be adept ventriloquists, using themselves as their own dummies to force through the sounds of other, older poetic voices. Larkin was no exception. For a good while, he wrote in imitation of W. H. Auden; then he went through his Yeats period. A friend at Oxford characterized another phase of his writing as reminiscent of Dylan

Thomas, "but you've a sentimentality that's all your own." Before he was twenty-five Larkin had published three books: a derivative—from Yeats—volume of poems entitled *North Ship* (1945) and two novels, *Jill* (1946) and *Girl in Winter* (1947), both of which showed more in the way of dogged determination than talent.

Yet Larkin was very smart very young, and about literature never less than serious. Developing his own precise laconic style took a while—the discovery of the poetry of Thomas Hardy was decisive—but not all that long. When it happened it came very quickly: suddenly, in his own barebones explanation, "thoughts, feelings, language cohered and jumped." By the time he published the poems in the volume entitled *The Less Deceived*, in 1955, when he was thirty-three, he had come into his maturity.

It was around that same time that Larkin wrote to his friend Robert Conquest about those poets (himself, Conquest, John Wain, and Kingsley Amis, among others) then known collectively as the Movement:

For my part I feel we have got the method right—plain language, absence of posturings, sense of proportion, humor, abandonment of the dithyrambic ideal—and are waiting for the matter: a fuller and more sensitive response to life as it appears from day to day, and not only on Mediterranean holidays financed by the British Council.

If such was the method of the poets in the Movement, the true matter would really come only to Larkin. His work is in many ways the poetic equivalent of the novels of his friend Barbara Pym, whose cause he championed in the 1960's and 70's when she was unable to find a publisher. As Larkin wrote to his own publisher, Charles Monteith, attempting to get him interested in Miss Pym:

I like to read about people who have done nothing spectacular, who aren't beautiful and lucky, who try to behave well in the limited field of activity they command, but who can see, in little autumnal moments of vision, that the so-called "big" experiences of life are going to miss them; and I like to read about such

JOSEPH EPSTEIN, a long-time contributor to COMMENTARY, is the editor of the *American Scholar* and the author of seven books of essays and a collection of short stories.

things presented not with self-pity or despair or romanticism, but with realistic firmness and even humor.

Some might dispute whether Larkin's own poems are free of "self-pity or despair"; an easy enough case could be made that many are not, beginning with his remark that "deprivation is for me what daffodils were to Wordsworth." Still, he was entirely and sincerely of the view (as he put it in a brief essay) that poetry, like all art, "is inextricably bound up with giving pleasure, and if a poet loses his pleasure-seeking audience he has lost the only audience worth having, for which the dutiful mob that signs on every September [that is, students] is no substitute." And he meant pleasure in the most fundamental sense; if a poem did not please, he felt, one ought to chuck it. His own recipe for poetry was to "make readers laugh, make them cry, and bring on the dancing girls."

Through self-mockery, comic derision, a fine firm control of language, a nicely subdued lyricism, and an impressive talent for facing awkward and unpleasant facts, Larkin took poetry away from the academics and brought it back within the grasp of the intelligent ordinary reader who looks to poetry for insight, delight, and even consolation. Consider "Love," a poem that is neither one of Larkin's best nor among his most famous, but is a characteristic performance:

The difficult part of love
Is being selfish enough,
Is having the blind persistence
To upset an existence
Just for your own sake.
What cheek it must take.

And then the unselfish side—
How can you be satisfied,
Putting someone else first
So that you come off worst?
My life is for me.
As well ignore gravity.

Still, vicious or virtuous,
Love suits most of us.
Only the bleeder found
Selfish this wrong way round
Is ever wholly rebuffed,
And he can get stuffed.

OF ALL modern writers, poets tend to be the most careful promoters of their careers. Perhaps they have to be, working in a form where supply hugely exceeds demand, if one can speak of demand at all. Even the magisterial T.S. Eliot, as the first published volume of his letters shows, was something of a main-chance man. In 1919, Eliot wrote to J.H. Woods, his teacher at Harvard, that "there are only two ways in which a writer can become important—to write a great deal, and have his writings appear everywhere, or to write very little." Eliot goes on to report that he has taken the latter course, having

published only one volume of verse and printing only two or three poems each year. "The only thing that matters," he adds, "is that these should be perfect in their kind, so that each should be an event."

To publish infrequently but always to dazzle—this was the way Eliot chose and so did Philip Larkin, though, in Larkin's case, it is perhaps more precise to say that this was the way that chose him. A steady but very slow worker till the last decade or so of his life, when he fell into a nearly complete writer's block, Larkin was painfully perfectionist. After *The Less Deceived* he published only two further slender volumes of verse—*The Whitsun Wedding* (1964) and *High Windows* (1974)—at roughly ten-year intervals. *All What Jazz*, a collection of the record reviews he wrote for the *Daily Telegraph*, appeared in 1970, and *Required Writing*, his collected journalism and interviews, in 1982, three years before his death.

Larkin could not have hoped to live off such limited literary production, and in fact his principal income came from his job as the head librarian at the University of Hull. He had drifted into librarianship after failing, not long after graduating with a First from Oxford, to find a position in either the civil service or the Foreign Office. "At interviews," he wrote to a friend, "I must obviously show that I don't give a zebra's turd for any kind of job."

Larkin became a librarian largely because he felt himself unfit to do much else. A poet, the Russian proverb has it, always cheats his boss: usually by thinking about, if not actually writing, poems on the job. Not so Larkin, who was a highly competent librarian, managing a staff of more than 100 employees at Hull, where he oversaw a vast rebuilding of the university's library and, from all accounts, kept things generally humming along smoothly.

Small though Larkin's literary production was, he was handsomely rewarded for it. He won every major poetry prize offered in England, including the Queen's Gold Medal. By his early fifties, universities began awarding him honorary degrees. He was asked to serve on literary panels and prize committees, and became a rather effective literary bureaucrat. He was the subject of a BBC television program, and a reading of his work by others was staged in London under the title "An Evening Without Philip Larkin." He was made a Companion of Honor by Prime Minister Thatcher. Earlier, W.H. Auden and John Betjeman offered to nominate him for the poetry professorship at Oxford, which he would easily have won but which he turned down. He also refused the poet laureateship. In a birthday volume entitled *Larkin at Sixty*, the playwright Alan Bennett, commenting on Larkin's famous distaste for public celebration, wrote that "a birthday party for Philip Larkin is like treating Simone Weil to a

candlelight dinner for two at a restaurant of her choice." Although he was never taken in by this kind of success, Larkin realized that, at the table of public recognition, he had been served exceedingly well.

Larkin was especially artful at that greatest of all modern tools of self-promotion, the interview. In those he gave, Larkin drew a picture of himself as a winning curmudgeon, dedicated to attacking obscurity and deflating pretension, and asserting an appetite for simple philistine pleasures. Famously insular, he answered a question about visiting China by saying that he would not mind it if he could return home the same day. When asked, "Do you feel you could have had a much happier life?," he replied, "Not without being someone else."

In these interviews and in his occasional journalism, Larkin presented himself as a man who had the clarity and courage to be against his time—artistically and in almost every other way. He was, he wished it to be known, not in the poetry racket: "I have never read my poems in public, never lectured on poetry, never taught anyone how to write it." In explanation of his refusal to give readings, he said, "I don't want to go around pretending to be me." He also cut himself loose from the academy, which he thought encouraged poetry to be more difficult than it ought to be; this imposed difficulty was part of the legacy of modernism, a road which, in his view, should never have been taken. And, finally, in his political views, he dissociated himself from the liberal leftism that was and remains dominant in literary and academic culture.

IN HIS introduction to *All What Jazz*, Larkin explained his strong dislike of modernism (as represented by such diverse artists as Ezra Pound, Pablo Picasso, and Charlie Parker) in these words:

... I dislike such things not because they are new, but because they are irresponsible exploitations of technique in contradiction of human life as we know it. This is my essential criticism of modernism, whether perpetrated by Parker, Pound, or Picasso: it helps us neither to enjoy nor to endure. It will divert us as long as we are prepared to be mystified or outraged, but maintains its hold only by being more mystifying and more outrageous: it has no lasting power.

Do Larkin's own poems have this power? People in a position to say always seemed to think they did. His American contemporary Robert Lowell much admired Larkin's poetry. (Larkin, on the other hand, thought Lowell "simply barmy.") Another American, the poet and critic Randall Jarrell, although he never wrote about Larkin publicly, similarly championed his work in his letters. ("I'm crazy about him," Jarrell wrote to Lowell.) Auden and Betjeman greatly valued

Larkin's poems. But, quite as important, many readers who had long before given up on poetry as too abstruse, specialized, private—to borrow Marianne Moore's words, an imaginary garden inhabited by altogether too many too real toads—found themselves reading Larkin with amusement and appreciation.

A funny game, poetry: as Jarrell once pointed out, a poet has only a half-dozen or so times to strike lightning—that is, to write the perfect poem—and he is assured immortality. Yet how few have done it! Jarrell himself did not. It is unclear whether Robert Lowell can be said to have done it more than once or twice. Among modern poets of an earlier generation, T.S. Eliot did; so, too, did Wallace Stevens; by no means is it plain that William Carlos Williams or Marianne Moore did. Auden did, as did Robert Frost, perhaps more convincingly and in greater profusion than any other modern poet.

By this measure—the composition of a handful of resounding and flawless poems—Philip Larkin appears to have succeeded, too. In "At Grass," "Church Going," "Mr. Bleaney," "Dockery and Son," "Old Fools," "Aubade," poems where the tiles slide perfectly into place and the finished work closes with a satisfying click, he produced major poems, perfect of their kind. In "Annus Mirabilis," "Verse de Société," "Naturally the Foundation Will Bear Your Expenses," "This Be the Verse," and a great many more he wrote strong comic poems, usually with a sharp bitter twist. Larkin is a poet who is not only readable but rereadable and—the third and ultimate test—memorable. His genius was to have taken the imperfections of his life, perhaps his chief subject matter, and turned them into perfection in his work.

WHEN Philip Larkin died of cancer of the esophagus in 1985, his fame was great and his claims on immortality considerable. But a funny thing happened on the way up Parnassus. Among Larkin's literary executors are Anthony Thwaite and Andrew Motion. Thwaite is a literary journalist and a former editor of the (now-defunct) monthly *Encounter*, while Motion is an academic and critic of poetry; both are also poets. Between them they divided the literary spoils. Thwaite brought out a *Collected Poems* (1988) and last year the *Selected Letters of Philip Larkin, 1940-1985*,* while Motion wrote what is intended to be the definitive biography, *Philip Larkin, A Writer's Life*.†

Taken together, these three books have come near to sinking Philip Larkin's reputation. All his life Larkin feared death, and he turns out to have been correct, but in a way he could not have known—for what has happened to him after

* Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 791 pp., \$40.00.

† Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 570 pp., \$35.00.

death is much worse than anything in his life. "A couple of years ago Larkin was still our best-loved postwar poet," Martin Amis has written in dismay; "now, for the time being, he is the most reviled."

The *Collected Poems* did the least damage. The complaint about it was that everything good in the book was not new and much that was new was not good, and so should have been excluded. As editor, Anthony Thwaite chose to print several of Larkin's youthful poems—those written between the ages of seventeen and twenty-three—many of which Larkin himself referred to as "pseudo-Keats babble." Thwaite also included a small number of poems that Larkin considered unfinished. A perfectionist with the patience to go with his proclivity, the mature Larkin, as Thwaite notes, "could not bring himself to publish anything about which he felt any doubt." Yet since Larkin felt doubt about almost everything having to do with himself, Thwaite overruled him in death and printed a number of poems which in his view "deserve to stand with [Larkin's] best already known work." Some, in my view, do; some, regrettably, do not.

But such controversy as the *Collected Poems* brought was confined to poets and critics of contemporary poetry, and was an intramural affair at best. The same cannot be said for the publication of the *Selected Letters* and Andrew Motion's biography. In England the *Letters* came out before the *Life*; here the *Life* preceded the *Letters*. In some ways it is best to read the *Letters* first—as it happens, I did not—because they tend, if not to refute the *Life*, at least to complicate and hence to soften it.

Behind Andrew Motion's biography of Philip Larkin lurks what feels like one of those Henry James stories about betrayal among artists. Although Motion contends that he had nothing of the sort in mind, and claims too that his biography is sympathetic to its subject, his life of Larkin is, in fact, oddly prosecutorial. (In the *Selected Letters*, it is worth remarking, Larkin's own comments about Motion tend to be mildly derisive.) The Philip Larkin who emerges from Motion's book is ungenerous, neurotic, bigoted, utterly self-regarding, and damned unpleasant generally. Think how he might have emerged in a biography not written by a friend.

Forgiveness is at the heart of biography. The biographer either will or will not find it in himself to pardon his subject the transgressions he is almost certain to discover once he begins digging around in the life. Especially is this the case in biographies of modern artists. The modern artist, after all, has long had a warrant, a sanction of a sort, to be a miserable son of a bitch. Driven to distraction by the difficulties of his work—so the warrant reads—the artist, if he is not a little mad to begin with, must be allowed a wider berth than the rest of us to leave more human rubble in his

wake. It is an old story: the wound and the bow, and all that.

The roll of artists in the modern age is filled with alcoholics, misanthropes, megalomaniacs, major-league neurotics, creeps, drips, and simple bad hats. The list of those noted for kindness and acts of unmotivated goodness is shorter than the list of four-star restaurants in Duluth. When yet another artist with a difficult personality presents himself to be written about, the biographer must choose either to sympathize, understand, and explain away the unpleasantness, or nail the fellow to the wall.

Philip Larkin had what I should call a troubled rather than a difficult personality, and Andrew Motion is at some pains to explain the origins of his troubles. A shy and stammering boy with poor eyesight, homely, awkwardly tall, not notably gifted in the skills appreciated by the young, brought up in a loveless marriage, Larkin had rich ground in his early life for psychological complication. "I never left the house," he later wrote, "without the sense of walking into a cooler, cleaner, saner, and pleasanter atmosphere, and, if I had not made friends outside, life would have been scarcely tolerable." As Motion shows, Larkin was one of those boys whose keenest pleasures tended to be lonely ones: reading, going to the movies, listening to jazz records. Sex, he would later aver, was really too good to share with anyone else.

Larkin thought his mother a passive, tidy-minded, dreary woman who felt her life always slipping out of control. His father, Sidney Larkin, rose to be the city treasurer in Coventry and was a much more complex case. "Everything Larkin disliked or feared in his father," Motion writes, "was matched by something he found impressive or enviable." Among those impressive or enviable items were self-reliance, immense competence, respect for education, knowing one's own mind, wide reading. Sidney Larkin shaped his son's literary tastes, guiding him to G. B. Shaw, Thomas Hardy, Oscar Wilde, Arnold Bennett, and Samuel Butler as well as D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, and Katherine Mansfield. Sidney Larkin was also pro-German—he was, as Philip later described him, "the sort of person that democracy didn't suit"—and possibly even pro-Hitler. This last fact would be used, if not by Motion then by others among Larkin's recent contemnors, to count against the son's own politics.

ALTHOUGH in his introduction Motion speaks to the contradictory qualities that comprised Larkin's personality—his selfishness and his kindness, his shyness and his skill at self-promotion, his reactionary attitudes and his personal tolerance—the more generous and admirable aspects of the man somehow fall away over the long haul of this biography. They do so because Motion cannot finally forgive Larkin for

two things: his relations with women and his political opinions.

Larkin was one of nature's bachelors. His own family life probably put paid forever to the idea of his marrying. As he once noted in his diary: "Let me remember that the only married state I intimately know (i.e., that of my parents) is bloody hell. Never must it be forgotten." And in an autobiographical fragment, he wrote: "Certainly the marriage [of his parents] left me with two convictions: that human beings should not live together, and that children should be taken from their parents at an early age." Or, as he put it more concisely in the last quatrain of "This Be the Verse":

Man hands on misery to man.
It deepens like a coastal shelf.
Get out as early as you can,
And don't have any kids yourself.

In life, it was not quite so simple. While Larkin never spoke of a longing for children—he wrote that he lost his interest in religion when he learned that in heaven one would return to the state of childhood—he did long for women. In letters to unmarried male friends, he spoke of women, as bachelors will, in the standard degrading way, with his own twist of Larkinesque humor: "I *don't* want to take a girl out and spend circa £5 when I can toss off in five minutes, free, and have the rest of the evening to myself." To his friend Jim Sutton he wrote that "my relations with women are governed by a shrinking sensitivity, a morbid sense of sin, a furtive lechery." Women liked scenes, wanted children, wore their emotions like clothes, were possessive. "Above all they like feeling they 'own' you—or that you 'own' them—a thing I hate."

All this makes Larkin sound like a man who would be quite ruthless with any woman who came his way; or perhaps like a man who would do better to steer clear of women altogether. In fact, against the advice of the metaphysical poet, he could neither wholly abstain nor wed. His adult life was an almost perpetual entanglement with women whom he could neither marry nor easily break away from. He yearned for female companionship, then he wanted to be free of it; he was unhappy without a woman in his life but always uncomfortable when enmeshed in a love affair. As he jotted in one of his notebooks:

Not love you? Dear, I'd pay ten quid for you:
Five down, and five when I got rid of you.

He never sorted it out. In his twenties, he was engaged to a woman who lived in Wellington, the site of his first library job. He had a long relationship with an attractive woman, an English-literature academic named Monica Jones, who lived in Northumberland, a freedom-giving distance away from Hull. He had an unconsummated relationship with a recent graduate of Queen's College in

Belfast, with whom he worked at that school's library. Off and on, he saw a woman who worked at the library in Hull and whose earnest Catholicism brought sexual complications. He had an affair that sounds more like a fling with the divorced wife of a former friend. Much later in life, Motion informs us, he slept with his secretary. The clever title of a review of Larkin's *High Windows*, "Don Juan in Hull," drips with sad irony.

A PART from his quite true attachment to Monica Jones, Larkin seems to have been the sexual equivalent of a human type known as the permanent transient: wherever he was, he thought of elsewhere. In Larkin's case, whomever he was with, he longed for the company of another. On holiday with one of his lady friends, he was certain to correspond with another. "You see," he wrote to Jim Sutton, "my trouble is that I never like what I've got."

To justify this refusal of final commitment, Larkin invoked his work. "How will I be able to write," he asked the woman he was engaged to in his twenties, "when I have to be thinking of you?" The composer Maurice Ravel took the line, which Larkin would have approved, that it is probably best for an artist not to marry: "He lives like an awakened dreamer," Ravel said, "and that's not amusing for a woman who lives with him." Larkin, in his middle forties, wrote to Monica Jones in his characteristically abashed tone to apologize for holding things at bay between them in order to get his writing done. "Anyone would think I was Tolstoy, the value I put on it," he said, adding: "It hasn't amounted to much."

Andrew Motion has a theory that Larkin's conflict with women was at the center of his power to write poems. "When he approached the middle of his life he stopped seeing the conflict as something that must be resolved, and regarded it instead as the means of self-definition." True enough, this conflict gave Larkin the subject matter for some of his sadder poems—"Self's the Man," "Talking in Bed"—about loneliness and the impossibility of striking any enduring human connection. "I believe that human beings can do nothing for one another except provide amusement, which is pleasant but does not last," he wrote when still a young man. Yet there was no pleasure in any of this for Larkin himself, who felt that when he was old he would regret having wasted his life and "therefore, in addition to being afraid of death, I shall feel cheated and angry."

If Philip Larkin never quite sorted out his relations with women, neither, quite, does his biographer. When all the many details Motion provides have worked their way into the reader's mind, they lead to the conclusion, in the crude thinking of our day, that Philip Larkin was a misogynist, his selfishness amounting to cruelty. It does not help matters to learn that Larkin also had a

taste for soft pornography. Yet the tenderest of his letters are those written to women, and by no means all of them to women in whom he had a sexual interest. He was able consistently to strike the note of intimacy with women in a way he could not do with men. With women he is often at his best.

The point that one has to consider is that what Larkin sometimes said, he did not necessarily always mean; and even in those instances where he might have meant the unpleasant personal views he uttered, he never acted upon them. In middle life, in an autobiographical fragment, Larkin might refer to his mother, with her compulsiveness and irritating passivity, as a "sniveling pest," but in fact throughout her old age (she lived to be ninety-one) he stood by her, writing to her almost daily, traveling to visit her on a regular (and frequent) basis, and seeing her through to the end as the dutiful son he was. He may have been grudging in his dutifulness, but such duty is hard, and in the end the chief thing is that he performed it.

THE separation of word from deed is not always simple, but it is one that becomes crucial in a culture like ours where opinions are allowed to eclipse or even negate accomplishments. Which brings us to the second of Andrew Motion's problems, and almost everyone else's who has written about his book and Anthony Thwaite's edition of the *Selected Letters*: Philip Larkin's politics and the social opinions behind them. In one view, Larkin's politics were right-wing; in another, my own, they were thoroughly anti-Left. It is not quite the same thing.

Larkin thought the left-wing politics of the Labor party, of the British trade unions, and of university students in the 60's and the teachers who chose to go along with or abet them, were destroying England. As he wrote to a friend:

You can't be more depressed than I about the state of the country. To my mind it is only a question of time before we are a sort of sub-Ireland or Italy, with the population scratching a living by sucking up to tourists and the Queen doing two performances a day of *Trooping the Colour* for coach loads of Middle-Westerners and Russian Moujiks. God, what an end to a great country.

In the *Selected Letters*, such sentiments, often expressed less politely, have landed Larkin in deep posthumous trouble. In British reviews of the *Letters* and of Andrew Motion's *Life*, Larkin has been accused of "racism, misogyny, and quasi-fascist views." He has been referred to as a "foul-mouthed bigot"; had his masculinity questioned; and declared "really a nutcase." The publication of the *Life* and the *Letters*, opening Larkin's political views to the public, has also led to a reassessment of him as a poet. A man holding the views he did, it has been suggested, cannot be

other than a minor artist with an inflated reputation, which it is now time to deflate.

On the charitable side, critics have written that, though Larkin's views may have been hideous and he a terrible fellow, nonetheless the poems remain and it is for the poems alone that he should be remembered and for which we should be grateful. This general line rather echoes Larkin himself on the World War I poet Wilfred Owen, of whom, in a letter to Robert Conquest, he wrote: "W.O. seems rather a prick, really, yet the poems stay good."

Meanwhile, the self-appointed members of the thought police in our universities have before them the happy task of raking Larkin's poems for evidence of unacceptable opinions. Odd, is it not, that an on-the-make character in one poem, "Posterity," should be named Jake Balokowsky, a Jew? Misogyny is easily enough sniffed out. Racism may present a tougher job; but maybe not, for is not any admiration for the British empire, as in "Homage to a Government," evidence of racism? And what about homophobia? Stay on the case: it must be there somewhere. Academics exist who will find all this not in the least tiresome work.

But how bad are the opinions expressed in Larkin's letters? Some are pretty bad, others are bad but funny, a few are of a kind that admirers of Larkin will wish were never voiced. Ironical derision is a note often struck in these letters. Larkin loved to spot a phony, to call a spade a freakin' shovel. Thus, he refers to Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* as "the American hymn to cowardice," and to the IRA as "these mad murdering Irish swine." He notes that the universities are "educating the children of the striking classes." Of a poetry competition he is judging, he writes: "About half the entrants are Yanks, all worrying about Vietnam and being Jewish." He calls the British critic A. Alvarez "El Al" and Salman Rushdie "Salmagundi." Italy is "wopland" and Morocco "coonland." Mocking the movement, so popular in the early 80's, to rid university portfolios of any investments in South Africa, he derides the "years-long wrangle over South African shares, or shares in companies that have South African interests, or shares in firms that employ chaps who once ate a South African orange, or something."

Humor has always taken its seasoning from the forbidden, from deliberate indiscretion, and if one cannot be indiscreet in correspondence with dear friends, then we are all in sad shape. ("Letters," the young T.S. Eliot wrote to his college friend Conrad Aiken, "should be indiscretions—otherwise they are simply official bulletins.") Yet, such is the touchiness of the time in which we live, a famous literary man now has to be wrier of what he writes than a millionaire playboy wooing a trial lawyer's daughter.

There is worse. "Keep up the cracks about wogs and niggers," Larkin wrote to his friend Kingsley

Amis. (One hopes Sir Kingsley is even now at the document shredder.) To certain correspondents—Amis, Conquest, a man named Colin Gunner—Larkin reciprocated in kind. The “cracks” range in meanness from a reference to the “bloody Paki next door” to “And as for those black scum kicking up a din on the boundary [of the cricket field at Lord’s]—a squad of South African police would have sorted them out to my satisfaction.”

I WISH Larkin had never said such things because they can only be used against him by people who, along with being impressed with their own virtue, cannot stand too much complication in human character. The truth about the *Selected Letters of Philip Larkin* is that their author was a good-hearted man who could write with exquisite tact to a woman who had sent him a novel about the death of her son in a tragic accident; who could bemoan killing a hedgehog and later write a poem, “The Mower,” about it (“. . . we should be careful/ Of each other, we should be kind/ While there is still time”); who could soothe friends in their grief, stick by them in their suffering (see the letters to Barbara Pym), entertain them in their boredom, delight them with his faithful attention. The occasional politically-incorrect opinions have obscured the fact that there is scarcely a letter in the *Selected Letters* that does not contain something charming, touching, funny, or generous.

This is all the more impressive because Larkin seems to have been a genuinely unhappy man. In a review of *The Oxford Book of Death* he wrote that “man’s most remarkable talent is for ignoring death.” Certainly, he could never for long get it out of his own mind. Time was a perpetual slow leak, and the years were precious air always es-

caping him. His twenties, his thirties, his forties, his fifties, all seemed to him to have been wasted, to have gotten away in an “uneventful progress toward the grave.”

Larkin’s last years were a vast wet blanket of sadness. He was a fully blocked writer, who told a journalist that he “would sooner write no poems than bad poems.” He had put on weight, and could not forbear remarking on his “sagging face, an egg sculptured in lard, with goggles on—depressing, depressing, depressing.” “So we face 1982,” he wrote to Kingsley Amis, “sixteen stone six, gargantuanly paunched, helplessly addicted to alcohol, tired of livin’ and scared of dyin’, world-famous-unable-to-write poet, well you know the rest.” When in January 1985 he acquired a new Parker 61 fountain pen, he noted to an old friend that parts would be available for it for the next ten years, adding: “That’ll see me out.” He died before the year was done.

At the close of a brief paragraph of complaint in a letter to the writer John Wain, Larkin said sardonically about himself: “What I like about Phil, he always cheers you up.” Yet the strange fact is that reading Philip Larkin always does cheer one up—such, at least, is his effect on me. Sad though the subjects of his poems indubitably are, empty though his letters struggle to convince one that his life was, he himself remains an oddly stirring figure. There is something splendidly impressive about a man unable to lie about his experience and who, no matter how dark or even pathetic that experience, finds reason to laugh about it. Larkin’s poetry and life show that to be “less deceived,” though it may not be enough, is at least a start. They also show that just because life seems almost unrelievedly depressing—dour, laden with disappointment, with death waiting at the end—that is no reason to let it get you down.

Beethoven & the Pianists

Samuel Lipman

THE good news on the classical-music front is that the 32 Beethoven Piano Sonatas are still being played in concert and still being made available on CD recordings. In fact, interest in these cornerstones of the piano repertory has been renewed recently by the release on CD of two complete cycles, one old and one new. In 1991, the first complete cycle ever recorded—made for HMV in London between 1932 and 1935 by the Austrian pianist Artur Schnabel (1882-1951), a pupil of Theodor Leschetizky, who himself had studied with Beethoven's pupil Carl Czerny—was reissued on eight CD's.¹ Then, only a few months ago, a complete cycle recorded over the past decade by the American pianist Richard Goode (b. 1943), a student of Nadia Reisenberg and Rudolf Serkin, was brought together in a boxed set of ten CD's to wide acclaim.² Indeed, not only has Goode's cycle been acclaimed; it has even been found by at least one critic, Michael Kimmelman of the *New York Times*, to be superior to Schnabel's.

Before going on to compare these two sets, however, I think it may be useful to begin with some elementary comments about the kinds of pianists who play the Beethoven sonatas, which of them

they choose to play, and, above all, how they play them.

AMONG great pianists, the most basic distinction to be drawn is between the virtuoso and the musician. Virtuosos—like the Pole Josef Hofmann (1876-1957) and the Russian Vladimir Horowitz (1904-1989)—play for the love of the piano and for the love of the audience which reacts first to their playing and then, ultimately, to them as personalities, existing not necessarily apart from the music but always tending to transcend it.

The virtuoso pianist feels that the music, no matter how incontestably great, is clay in his hands. Faultless execution, always seemingly effortless, defying the laws of gravity, is his goal; a sloppy, heavy-handed, earthbound virtuoso is a contradiction in terms. The virtuoso always seems to be laughing as he shakes his pianistic tricks out of his sleeve. However hard he slaves, however much the effort to be brilliant costs him, is none of his audience's business. What counts is the defiance of mortal physical limitations.

Hence the virtuoso pianist's repertory is concentrated on the more showy pieces of Schumann and Chopin, and on the dazzling works of Liszt. The virtuoso plays music from all countries, but he has a special affinity for Spanish and French works written around the turn of the century, and he also leans toward crowd-pleasing but often unknown encore pieces.

When the virtuoso ventures into the solo music of Beethoven, he tends to play the named sonatas—opus 13 (the "*Pathétique*"), opus

27, no. 2 (the "*Moonlight*"), opus 31, no. 2 (the "*Tempest*"), opus 53 (the "*Waldstein*"), opus 57 (the "*Appassionata*"), and opus 81A ("*Les Adieux*").³ But there are two other named sonatas that the virtuoso tends to avoid—opus 28 (the "*Pastoral*") and opus 106 (the "*Hammerklavier*"), evidently finding the former insufficiently exciting and the latter too long, too unpredictable in terms of audience reaction, and altogether not worth the ocean of effort its secure preparation requires. After all, virtuoso programs are made up on the principle of many short pieces rather than a few long ones; the virtuoso's programming principle is, "If you don't like what I've just played, you'll adore what's coming."

By contrast, the musician-pianist chooses his programs on the basis of what he sees as the enduring value of the music. To him the music comes first and its perfect execution a distant second. In Schnabel's apt formulation, one must always play "music which is better than it can be performed."

Again unlike the virtuoso, the musician-pianist inclines toward long pieces rather than short ones, neglected masterworks rather than popular ones, complete offerings of all the compositions of a composer in a particular genre, and programs devoted entirely to a single composer, such as Mozart or Schubert or Beethoven. For if the virtuoso thinks in terms of an unbroken string of gorgeous moments, the musician thinks of large structures, of musical architecture that comprehends not only an entire work but a composer's entire *oeuvre*.

Where the virtuoso sees his fingers and hands as weapons with

¹ Angel CDHH-63765.

² Elektra Nonesuch 9 79328-2.

³ Vladimir Horowitz, though, did record opus 10, no. 3 and, late in his career, opus 101.

which to conquer the public, the musician sees them as a means by which the composer is brought to life. The virtuoso violinist Jascha Heifetz's well-known comment to a student about why he chose one fingering for a difficult passage in preference to another—"it pays off"—could not be further from the musician's attitude toward his body. The musician is aware of his fingers only when they have failed, and not always then; he is too busy concentrating on the music he is playing, which is always beyond perfect human replication.

In short, the virtuoso is the music's master, while the musician is the music's servant.

I CAN readily appreciate that what I have just written may seem damning to the virtuoso, and may seem to canonize the musician. But there are great virtuosos who make the music they play live in excitement and rapture; and there are musicians who let the music they play perish in pedantry, poverty of execution, and sheer boredom. Some virtuoso performances of individual Beethoven sonatas are indeed wonderful—I think immediately of Horowitz's 1950's RCA recordings of opus 10, no. 3 and of the "Waldstein," both breathtaking if cool in their perfection and brilliance;⁴ I think, too, of the now little-known Russian virtuoso Vladimir Sofronitsky's concert recording in the 1940's of only the first movement (alas) of the *"Appassionata,"* remarkable in its highlighting of melodies and the elucidation of large structural elements.

Yet all this having been admitted and even stressed, the fact remains that it is not virtuoso pianists who play complete Beethoven cycles, but musician-pianists like Schnabel and Goode, and it is to their performances of the cycle that I would now like to turn. The playing on these CD's cannot be discussed, however, without first taking note of the different recording processes involved in the production of the two sets.

The Schnabel discs were originally made in the early days of electric recording—the process had

only come into use in 1925—and thus were still in a sense technically experimental. They were done on four-minute 78-RPM sides, requiring the artist to cut each movement most often into two or more parts. The challenge thus posed for Schnabel was to maintain musical continuity among segments of a single movement, and among the different movements of an entire sonata, when each section might be recorded separately from those before and after it by a matter of minutes, hours, or even days and months. And of course each four-minute disc had to be accepted or rejected by the artist *in toto*. No corrections were possible without junking the entire side and trying again, with the chance always present of making even worse errors in the new attempt.

As is well known, recordings such as those of Goode can now be produced quite differently. Whole movements and entire compositions can be taped in long stretches and, if so desired, in one continuous performance. Any errors or passages felt to require improvement can be cut out and inaudibly replaced by corrected versions called splices or inserts in a process made even easier by the new digital techniques. It is because of this ability to make corrections, not because of any improvement in performing standards, that new recordings are note-perfect, while old ones are often technically sloppy, slapdash, and therefore irremediably flawed.

EVEN though the Goode recordings may well have achieved note-perfection by such "artificial" means, it is exhilarating to listen to the Beethoven sonatas played with every detail in place, and without the assorted messes so characteristic of the recordings of older artists (and without the messes characteristic of much live playing by today's artists in concert). Chords are clean; scales are even and unrushed; accompaniment patterns are audible but never too prominent; tempos are naturally blended into each other; exhausting technical passages never seem

to exhaust the pianist. And of course the actual sound of the piano is vastly better, without any trace of the distortion and surface noise that still dog even the best CD transfers of 78-RPM originals.

There is no doubt that Goode's playing is excellent. He has a strong feeling for the line of the music and, even after all allowance has been made for the possibility of splicing, a fine technique. He tends most of the time to play these sonatas lightly, especially the early ones (those written before the three opus-31 works). But I wonder how comfortable he himself is with this prevailing quality of lightness; often his *sforzando*⁵ notes and chords boom and blast, putting pressure even on today's dynamically capacious recording techniques (though, in all fairness, some of this may be due to the overbrilliant quality of many American Steinway concert grands made toward the end of the 1980's).

It is perhaps not enough to call Goode's playing light. His tone is characteristically detached rather than legato, with each note separated from its predecessors and successors not by an instant of silence but by a sensation of attack. The effect of this kind of playing may be heard in the pristine repeated chords at the opening of the "Waldstein" and in the evenness of the supremely difficult glissando octaves at the end of the finale. It may also be heard in the exact execution of the opening pages of the *"Hammerklavier"* and in the transparent voice-leading in the closing fugue. This detached quality is characteristic of post-World War II piano playing in general and in particular of American playing, in which clarity is stressed at the expense of a cantabile tone.

As is always the case, an artist's technical approach is not simply confined to technical effect; it fundamentally determines his musical effect as well. For example,

⁴ Opus 10, no. 3 is now available on RCA CD 60986-2; the "Waldstein" is available on RCA CD 60375-2-RG.

⁵ A musical term meaning a sudden loud sound in the middle of a quiet passage, an expressive device often required by Beethoven.

Goode's tempos, probably to preserve his articulation, are often slower than they might otherwise be. Then, too, Goode appears to be striving—I suspect once more in the interest of clarity—for a balance between melody and accompaniment in which the melody is only slightly more pointed up dynamically than are the subsidiary figures which provide the harmonic underpinning.

Overall, however, there is a rather less attractive aspect to Goode's redoubtable clarity. Every one of the myriad melodies—and in Beethoven the term melody includes scales and arpeggios as well as lyric outpourings—is subject to the same disjunct piano sound as his brilliant technical passages. Melodies do not soar, neither do they melt. In this playing, the listener is conscious of note following note as one fence post follows another on a road. The connecting melodic tissue of the music is forgotten and the grand scale of each sonata lost in the exact execution of each detail.

If we are to rely for taxonomic purposes on the customary division of the Beethoven sonatas into three periods—the early sonatas from opus 2, no. 1 to opus 28; the middle sonatas from opus 31, no. 1 to opus 90; and the late sonatas from opus 101 to opus 111—we can say that Goode's prevailing lightness both makes evident the roots of the early pieces in the 18th-century world of Haydn and tends to suggest that the middle and late works also share the same 18th-century origins.

This approach may be deemed valid, and it is sustained by the many excellences of Goode's playing and his deeply musical conception of these pieces. But it must also be realized that a classical conception can only be chosen at the expense of the great romantic features of this music—precisely those features that are so richly expressed in Schnabel's approach.

SCHNABEL, of course, is very much subject to the limitations of early 1930's technology. Thick passages are often covered by a buzz of distortion; in very quiet passages the

surface noise created by the cutting of the original wax with a mechanical stylus is all too evident; the dynamic range, though surprisingly large, still seems constricted; and the listener is often conscious of the engineer "riding gain" on the volume, making soft passages louder so that they can be heard through the surface noise, and loud passages softer so that they will not cause the blasting distortion for which early electrical 78-RPM discs were known.

But there is also something quite wonderful about the sound of the Schnabel records, and I suspect that it is not simply a matter of Schnabel's beautiful tone:⁶ the Bechstein concert grands upon which he very likely made these records were beautiful pianos indeed, marked by a bell-like but sustained timbre in the treble.

Moreover, Schnabel (despite certain failings) did in fact possess a remarkable pianistic facility. His trills were among the fastest, most even, and most nuanced of which we have recorded evidence; his fingers were fleet and delicate; his chord playing was full and rich; and above all his ability to control subtle shadings in both melody and accompaniment remain unparalleled to this day in the playing of Beethoven.

On the other hand, it is also obvious from these records that Schnabel was not always equal to the technical exigencies of the music. On occasion, passages are smudged and tempos are lightning fast, and sometimes—the most egregious example is the dreadful jumble he makes of the first page of the "*Hammerklavier*"—his technical defects distract the listener from the music.

Most often, however, the listener, regardless of the pianist's manifest technical imperfections, is caught up in the sweep of the music. For Schnabel is always conscious of the melodies, where their phrasing is leading, and their role in articulating the large-scale structure of these ineffably large-scale works. Because of his concentration on the melodic line, because of his unique ability to bring out the melody without forcing the

tone, Schnabel is able to demonstrate the music's movement, its direction, its purpose.

IN ADDITION to playing the Beethoven sonatas, Schnabel was also the editor in the 1920's of what remains by far the most distinguished 20th-century interpretive edition of these works,⁷ and as a performer it was his genius to obey Beethoven's text. My own favorite example of his attitude toward Beethoven's instructions is contained in a curt and peremptory footnote in his edition of the "*Waldstein*":

Pedal is the Composer's and must be observed. To change the Pedal in the third and fourth bar would destroy the very apparent intention of always letting the fundamental note sound, until the next fundamental note sounds.

But Schnabel also leavened his fidelity to the text with mercy and understanding. In a footnote to his edition of the "*Tempest*," he deals with a conflict between the complete and much respected 19th-century Breitkopf and Hartel edition of Beethoven's works and an earlier, unedited, original-text edition:

The complete critical edition (Br.a.H.) has a *rallentando* [a slowing down] here which is missing in the original text edition. The editor does not in any way consider this *rall.* to be an offense against the spirit and essence of this piece. Whoever "feels" it, may execute it un-

⁶ Hearing Schnabel live in (I think) 1947, playing two Mozart concertos with Pierre Monteux and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, I was conscious of the weakness of his fingers—he was not a well man, and it was only four years before his death—but I was also conscious of the golden strength of his tone.

⁷ By interpretive edition I mean one which makes performance recommendations not contained in Beethoven's often sparse notation; the other great interpretive edition was done in the late 19th century by the great pianist (and Liszt and Wagner disciple) Hans von Bülow. Interpretive editions are to be distinguished from textual editions, such as that by Schenker and Rätz, which confine themselves (except for fingering suggestions) strictly to Beethoven's own directions.

hesitatingly; who does not, may leave it alone.

Trite as it may be to say so, I think something of the essential Schnabel is caught in the word "feel." Schnabel, for all his learning, for all his respect for the text, for all his dislike of mere virtuoso piano playing and music, was in-

deed governed by feeling. For him, as a creature of the romantic era, communicating the emotion contained in the music was of prime importance. And so he succeeded in doing through all these performances, all eight CD's of them.

Indeed, there is about Schna-

bel's playing of this music the palpable aura of greatness. Though Richard Goode brings to his playing manifold virtues of mind and body, no similar aura attaches to him. At the present time he may well be the best we have playing this immortal music. Greatness, however, is something else again.

Movies

In the Name of the IRA

Richard Grenier

IN THE midst of his highly publicized 48-hour American visit, Gerry Adams, head of Sinn Fein, the political wing of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), found time on *Larry King Live*—that podium of presidents—to issue a rousing endorsement of *In the Name of the Father*, soon to be honored by seven Academy Award nominations. It was a "very good dramatic presentation," said Adams, and would give Americans an idea of "British injustice in Ireland."

By contrast, well before its release, much of the London press gave the film a particularly frigid reception, calling it a "farrago of rubbish" and claiming that its poisonous portrayal of British justice was based largely on malign fictions, which at this critical juncture could only further envenom Anglo-Irish relations. According to many of the British papers, the

film would unquestionably create new sympathy among ignorant American audiences for the IRA, still an unrepentant terrorist organization which refuses either to repudiate violence or to endorse the proposed new Irish-British peace negotiations that are supported, with the lone exception of the IRA, by everyone in London, Belfast, and Dublin—including both major Irish political parties. Responding to these and related concerns with a refreshing directness, one of the movie's stars, Academy Award-winning actress Emma Thompson (*Howard's End*), said, "I don't give a f___."

So the battle lines are drawn, as it were, between those attempting to determine whether *In the Name of the Father* will further the cause of justice in Britain and peace in Ireland, and those who "don't give a f___" whether the film is truth or lies and care only that it accomplish its didactic goal, which is apparently to vilify the British judicial system—with a somewhat hazier endorsement for the proposi-

tion, "Brits out!" (of Northern Ireland).*

In the Name of the Father is nominally "based" on an autobiographical book called *Proved Innocent* by Gerry Conlon, one of four persons convicted of killing five innocent people and injuring 64 more in 1974 in a pub bombing in Guildford, England—the four thereafter referred to in Britain as the "Guildford Four." Another member of the Guildford Four is Paul Hill, who, in addition to the role he was convicted of playing in the Guildford bombing, still stands

* In the last elections in Northern Ireland, Gerry Adams's Sinn Fein, which is determined to achieve the absorption of the North by the Irish Republic by any means including terrorism, won only 10 percent of the vote, a mere one-third of even Northern Ireland's Catholics. Meanwhile, in the most recent elections in the almost entirely Catholic Irish Republic, the Sinn Fein won a rousing 2 percent. Hence, in any democratic plebiscite, to which both London and Dublin are now committed under the terms of the new Downing Street declaration, Sinn Fein and the IRA are given no chance whatever of winning. Meanwhile, IRA terrorist attacks continued even while Gerry Adams was in New York.

RICHARD GRENIER is a columnist with the Washington Times. His most recent books are *The Marrakesh One-Two*, a novel, and *Capturing the Culture: Film, Art, and Politics*.

accused of an entirely separate IRA murder in Belfast, and who (a quaint detail) has recently married Courtney Kennedy, the daughter of the late Senator Robert Kennedy. This makes Paul Hill the nephew of both Senator Edward Kennedy (who strenuously lobbied the Clinton administration in February to reverse its position against letting Gerry Adams enter the country) and of Jean Kennedy Smith, the present U.S. ambassador to Dublin.

THE story of the "Guildford Four," "Birmingham Six," "Maguire Seven," and other persons accused of being IRA "active agents" in a series of bombings that left 40 innocent people dead and hundreds wounded is hardly a minor legal squabble. On the contrary, the 1974 bombings having horrified all of Britain, the case is one of the longest and most bitter chapters in the annals of British justice, unprecedented in modern times, which after years of investigations and trials has cost British taxpayers some \$30 million—something on the financial scale of Lawrence Walsh's Iran-*contra* investigations but awakening far stronger emotions in the general populace.

Conlon and other members of the Guildford Four were first convicted and served fifteen years in prison. But during the 1980's, amid heated allegations of police brutality and fabrication of evidence, the sentiment grew among British liberals that the Guildford Four had been improperly convicted—in British legal terminology, that their convictions were "unsafe," that they had not been proved guilty "beyond a reasonable doubt." In the eyes of their partisans, furthermore, they were totally innocent, and in time they were freed to great joy in the liberal community.

Criminal proceedings were then instituted against the three detectives charged with misconduct during police interrogation of the Guildford Four. But, just last year, these detectives too were found not guilty: not a single one of the accusations of brutality and fabrication of evidence had stuck. A whole chorus of new testimony was

heard at this second trial, some of which had not been deemed admissible during the earlier appeal hearing. To be brief about it, it seems that a member of the Guildford Four (the only one under consideration in the second trial) had "sung like a canary."

The not-guilty verdict for the police detectives set off a whole *new* chorus of protests, to the effect that the Guildford Four had been guilty of the bombings all along and should never have been released. Even the Maguire Seven, close relatives of Conlon, turned against him. His uncle, Pat Maguire—who had spent many years in prison thanks in part to his nephew's testimony—declared that Conlon "should be put back in prison for what he's done to my family," and blamed him for creating the whole tragic mess to begin with.

So what with the Guildford Four found on appeal to be not guilty, and the detectives accused of falsifying evidence against them also found to be not guilty, Britain now awaits the results of a special government inquiry into alleged miscarriages of justice under retired Lord Justice of Appeal Sir John May, who will make his report sometime after the appeal of the conviction for murder of Senator Kennedy's nephew.

The *London Sunday Times* suggested last May that the verdict vindicating the police detectives had changed the story of the Guildford Four completely, and it was therefore very difficult to see how the people then in the process of filming *In the Name of the Father* were going to be able to provide their movie with a "suitably heroic ending." But in this the *Sunday Times* demonstrated a vast innocence of the ways of the movie world, and of the curiously low level of honesty displayed by those making films "based on a true story," as *In the Name of the Father* is advertised.

IF WE were to take its argument as fact, *In the Name of the Father*, directed by Jim Sheridan (*My Left Foot*), is the story of an outrageous miscarriage of justice. We first meet Gerry Conlon (Daniel Day-

Lewis), a petty thief, as a rebellious youth in the streets of Belfast, caught up in a riot between Catholic locals and British troops (a fiction; Conlon took part in no such riot). Sent to London by his father, Giuseppe (Pete Postlethwaite), whom Conlon despises for his submissiveness (actually, Conlon adored his father), he arrives in London with his friend Paul Hill in the early 1970's and falls in with a gang of squatter-hippies ("We don't believe in property or law—only love") in the seedy flats of Kilburn, London's main Irish district.

On the night of the Guildford bombing, Conlon and Hill are shown resting in a park, where they meet a homeless old man lying on a bench. Later in the evening, Conlon robs a prostitute's apartment, which provides him with a nice amount of ready cash. But he and Hill are shortly picked up by police, acting under the new Prevention of Terrorism Act, and after seven days of brutal interrogation under the malign leadership of Police Inspector Robert Dixon (Corin Redgrave), they confess to the Guildford bombing, which has created a tremendous stir. Not only are Conlon, Hill, and two others (the Guildford Four) sentenced to many years in prison, but other friends and members of their family, the Maguire Seven, are also sent to prison as part of the conspiracy, principally on testimony by the Four.

In prison, however, Conlon meets the real IRA architect of the Guildford bombing, Joseph McAndrew (Don Baker), who confesses not only to Conlon but to the police that he is responsible for the bombing and that Conlon, Hill, and their friends are consequently totally innocent. The police believe him without question, but, led on by the diabolical Inspector Dixon, refuse to exonerate the Guildford Four. Inspector Dixon knows perfectly well the Four are innocent, but does not care. There is "public pressure." They are "Irish scum." And that is enough for him. Knowing the court is condemning innocent people, Dixon visibly gloats when they are convicted.

I should point out that there is no Inspector Dixon. He is a fiction. There is also no Joseph McAndrew, the IRA bigwig who in the film plans the Guildford bombing. He, too, is a fiction. Moreover, Conlon's "perfect" alibi, that he was busy on the night of the bombing robbing a prostitute's apartment, is something less than perfect in that he robbed the prostitute's apartment ten days later. And so we sail on through this sanctimonious movie, from one fictitious character to another, with "perfect" alibis whipped up out of thin air, and all presented with great polemical fervor.

BUT to return to *In the Name of the Father's* "true" story: with the "blatant outrage to justice" represented by the conviction, with totally innocent men rotting for fifteen years in prison, a white knight must surely come forth to free them. And this white knight appears in the person of a female solicitor, Gareth Peirce. One wonders if Emma Thompson gives a f__ about the extent to which the role she plays is fictionalized—indeed, almost entirely fabricated. In the movie, Gareth Peirce is a quite wonderful person, as well as a wonderful solicitor. Poring over police records, she discovers, by an implausible accident, another "perfect" alibi: a police interview with the *man on the bench in the park* which the prosecution has withheld from her—and which she goes on to use as the winning piece of evidence in the appeal.

In fact, the real Gareth Peirce learned of the police interview with the homeless old man on the bench in the park (actually a young greengrocer in a hostel) because the prosecution—exactly as it should have done—had communicated this information to her. But it was considered of such little importance that it was not even mentioned during the appeal as grounds for quashing the conviction. What the real Gareth Peirce actually discovered in the mountain of papers—none of which was concealed from her—was that some of the interrogation notes for the first trial, which were supposed to have been taken "contem-

poraneously," were written later, which made them "unreliable."

It was these "noncontemporaneous" notes, and two other seemingly technical details, which on appeal led the magistrates to consider the original convictions "unsafe." Even before the detectives were put on trial last year, the *London Financial Times* editorialized that there might after all be a relatively benign explanation of such modest chronological discrepancies, and that in slightly altering the times and notes of the interrogations the detectives might have felt "they had done nothing wrong and had nothing to hide." And, indeed, in the detectives' trial, it counted heavily in their favor that they had had the critical notes in their custody for years and could have shredded them at any moment. Yet in Jim Sheridan's movie, during the appeal in 1989 that won the Guildford Four their freedom, solicitor Gareth Peirce works herself into a near frenzy at the Old Bailey pleading the iniquity of the police and the Guildford Four's innocence—a speech that, alas, will not go down in the history of British law for the simple reason that it was never delivered. It is another fiction.

AN ARTISTIC judgment is hard to deliver on a film as feverishly polemical and as fast and loose in the presentation of its arguments as *In the Name of the Father*. It is rather as if an assemblage of terrorists were tried, convicted, and imprisoned for the bombing of the World Trade Center, whereupon a high-minded person decided to make a movie exonerating them. For this movie he falsifies every single known fact of the case and then calls on us to judge his film as a dramatic work and—as Sheridan says of his movie—as being true, if not to the detail, then to "the spirit" of the events.

Emma Thompson and Daniel Day-Lewis (who says he completely "loses" himself in his characters and has no objective judgment on them) both turn in excellent performances, as does Pete Postlethwaite as the elder Conlon, who dies in prison. Northern Irish people assure me that the Belfast

accents (Conlons, Maguires, and Hill) are impeccable—so impeccable I should imagine that at moments of great excitement American audiences will miss a bit of the dialogue. Jim Sheridan's directing I find heavily melodramatic, even when the events he is dramatizing actually occurred, which is rather rare. The mending of the relationship between the two Conlons, with the transmutation of the son's contempt for his father into deep respect as the two share the same prison cell, is well enough done—except of course that there was no contempt to begin with and that the two at no time shared the same prison cell and were rarely even in the same prison.

Even if we disengage *In the Name of the Father* from its heavy didactic thrust, the dramaturgy is crude. The good people (Conlons and other assorted Belfast Irish) are too good. The evil people (British police authorities up and down the scale) are too evil. The fictitious IRA man imprisoned with the Conlons is shown in the end to be also evil—although he is clearly strategic "cover," a fig leaf.

IN BRITAIN, as I remarked at the outset, there has understandably been a violent storm of criticism over *In the Name of the Father*. When the film opened in London in early February, Robert Kee, an Irish historical scholar who wrote a whole book on the case called *Trial and Error*, declared that it "tells so many lies that it makes its central proposition about a miscarriage of justice questionable." The *Sunday Times*, for its part, ran two major feature pieces under the headline: "THE CAMERA THAT LIES."

The movie has also been disowned by not one but both solicitors principally responsible for the defense of the Guildford Four. Gareth Peirce, acutely embarrassed by the prominence given her role (she came into the case at almost the last minute), has said that she considers herself an "extremely unimportant participant." Alastair Logan, on the other hand, who devoted twenty years of his life to the defense of the Guildford Four and without whom they would still be

in prison today, was truly horrified by the movie. It shows, he said, court scenes "which not only didn't happen, but which suggest we conduct our criminal cases on a charade basis."

Predictably, Britain's film critics were fuzzier than members of the country's legal profession or its scholars. The *Guardian's* reviewer declared that, however inaccurate *In the Name of the Father* may be, it should be viewed more as a "parable based on truth than [as] a thorough examination of the truth itself." The critic for the *Times* wrote approvingly that the film's "streamlining" allowed Sheridan to "suck audiences right inside its story of wrongs being righted." The *Daily Telegraph's* reviewer—alone noting all the ink "already spilled over the film's deviations from the facts"—asked, "At what point does dramatic license shade into unwarranted distortion of the truth?" He concluded that the movie "has no more than a nodding acquaintance with history," and stressed the anomaly of encountering this much lying in a film which makes such a point of "denouncing the lies of others."

ON THIS side of the Atlantic, the story was rather different. In estimating the potential audience for *In the Name of the Father*, it should be remembered that the cohesion of the Irish-American community is not what it used to be, and one even wonders how many votes were won in the Adams affair by either Senator Kennedy or Senator Moynihan, who also lobbied for lifting the Adams visa ban. The figure usually given for Americans of Irish descent is 40 million,

but even the IRA's worst enemies only accuse it of raising a mere \$100,000 a year from American sympathizers.

These people's Irish ancestors, needless to say, left Ireland with very real grievances and dreadful memories, and only a generation or two ago an Irish name in America still suggested membership in a tightly knit ethnic and religious minority. But it now tells one nearly nothing. Reagan, Regan, Brady, Murphy, Casey, O'Neill, Foley, Kennedy, Moynihan, Leahy, Walsh, Buckley—politically they are all over the map. And most of them know precious little about present-day Ireland, which has become quite a minor country in comparison with the number of people of Irish descent in America.

But *In the Name of the Father* is not playing to an ethnic constituency, it is playing to a moral constituency—and playing very well. Thus American film critics simply proceeded *en masse* to review this movie as if they were dealing with an unchallenged historical text. The *New York Times* called it "brilliant," "riveting." Other major critics called it "gripping," "impassioned," "powerful," "mesmerizing," "emotionally wrenching," "emotionally shattering." Among the seven nominations *In the Name of the Father* received from Hollywood's Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences were six for major awards: Best Picture, Best Director (Jim Sheridan), Best Actor (Daniel Day-Lewis), Best Supporting Actress (Emma Thompson), Best Supporting Actor (Pete Postlethwaite), and Best Adapted Screenplay (Sheridan and Terry George—the latter, it emerged in late February, a convicted felon

with links to the Irish National Liberation Army, another terrorist organization).

THE dean of one of this country's major schools of journalism once said that journalists were not liberals, they merely wanted to "right society's wrongs." Such a statement complacently assumes that journalists are capable of unerringly detecting, first, precisely what is wrong with society, and, second, precisely what to do about it. But when we arrive at the entertainment world—where information levels are far lower than among journalists or academics and notoriously lower than the entertainer's self-esteem—the urge to "right society's wrongs" becomes truly unhinged.

While at this writing both pictures have been in release for two months, *In the Name of the Father* has brought in only half the money at American box offices of another British import, Richard Attenborough's *Shadowlands*, with Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger. But *Shadowlands*, an excellent film, is about suffering, death, and man's reconciliation to the will of God, whereas *In the Name of the Father* is about injustice—about society's wrongs which the movie world must put right. That world simply has not absorbed the fact that the Guildford Four might not have been victims of an injustice at all, and that consequently there might not have been a wrong to put right to begin with. No, the American entertainment world, seconded by the American critical establishment, will right wrongs even when there are no wrongs. Surely there is no greater dedication to justice than this.

Who Is Addicted to What?

Midge Decter

CONTENTIONS, a new department we introduce here, will be devoted to the critical examination of a recently published article or report which is either significant in itself or representative of an important tendency in contemporary American thought and culture.

MIDGE DECTER is currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Institute on Religion & Public Life. A contributor to COMMENTARY since 1950, she has also written for many other magazines, including Harper's, the Atlantic, Partisan Review, Esquire, and First Things, and she is the author of three books: The Liberated Woman, The New Chastity, and Liberal Parents, Radical Children. As executive director of the Committee for the Free World, she created and edited its monthly publication, entitled Contentions, which ceased publication in 1990 and to which this new department is indebted.

BARBARA EHRENREICH, the Honorary Chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, is a journalist of considerable verve whose "field" is nothing less than the sins and foibles of the entire society, and the culture, in which she finds herself. Her scrappy mordancy of style and her broad interests have carried her all the way from the columns of *Mother Jones* on the far Left to the back page of *Time*, on which she periodically produces that magazine's "Essay" feature. In a recent *Time* essay (February 28) entitled "Kicking the Big One," she turns her colorful attention to the problem of drugs.

"An evil," she begins, "grips America, a life-sapping, drug-related habit." The evil she refers to is not drugs themselves but the country's continued insistence on prohibiting them. In her view this nourishes "a low-minded culture of winks and smirks," and it also siphons off "the resources that might be better used for drug treatment or prevention." As she sees it, along with heroin and nicotine, drug prohibition is itself an addiction that is "hell to kick." She recognizes that legalization would not be cost-free—so voracious is the American appetite for drugs—

but prohibition has proved to be an even more debilitating social toxin.

Consider, she continues, the moral effects of outlawing marijuana. An estimated 40 million Americans have tried it at some point, yet in certain states one can be sentenced to years in prison for possessing only a few grams of the stuff: "What does it do to one's immortal soul to puff and wink and look away while about 100,000 other Americans remain locked up for doing the exact same thing?" And the prohibition of cocaine and heroin may be more corrosive still, constituting as it does such a profitable invitation to organized crime, as well as to youth gangs and other lower-level distributors.

Drugs, of course, can kill, but so, too, Ehrenreich would remind us, does their prohibition. In Washington, D.C., for instance, 80 percent of homicides are drug-related, which means drug-prohibition related. It is gunshot wounds, not overdoses or bad trips, that fill our emergency rooms. Finally, the billions spent each year on drug-related law enforcement represent money not spent on improving schools and rebuilding neighborhoods. "Those who can't hope for the lasting highs of achievement

and self-respect are all too often condemned to crack."

Why, in the face of all this, do we not change our policy? We cling to prohibition, answers Ehrenreich, "for the same reason we cling to so many other self-destructive habits: because we like the way they make us feel." Prohibition makes its advocates feel powerfully righteous, and "militant righteousness has effects not unlike some demon mix of liquor and amphetamines: the eyes bulge, the veins distend, the voice begins to bray." Most of all, she adds, prohibition keeps us from having to confront all the other little addictions that get us through the day, such as the "NutraSweet in the coffee we use to wash down the chocolate mousse"; the martinis; the shopping for clothes—not to mention that addiction whose name we hardly dare speak, TV, "the substance-free citizen's 24-hour-a-day hallucinatory trip."

In answer to the argument that legalizing drugs would be sending the wrong message, especially to the country's children, she declares, "[The] message we're sending now is this: look, kids, we know prohibition doesn't work, that it's cruel and costs so much we don't have anything left over with which

to fight the social causes of addiction or treat the addicts, but, hey, it feels good, so we're going to keep right on doing it." And in conclusion, she consolingly tells those whom she calls the prohibition addicts that they do not have to quit cold turkey. The thing to do is start with marijuana and then ease up on cocaine and heroin possession, concentrating law enforcement on the big-time pushers. "Take it slowly, see how it feels. One day at a time."

BARBARA EHRENREICH'S view of how to deal with the drug crisis is, of course, not new. The argument for decriminalization has been coming at us—maybe not so cutely as in her essay, but with as much assurance—from a variety of sources for quite a while now.

Nor is this argument lacking in seductiveness. There is no denying that drugs are a major, and possibly *the* major, source of social pathology in America today. Nor could anyone in his right mind deny that law enforcement has scarcely made a dent in the problem; it is even possible, as Ehrenreich says, that the opposite is the case. We have, for instance, long tried, and long failed at, interdiction, including even an effort (if memory serves, first proposed to the Nixon administration by Daniel Patrick Moynihan) to plow up major poppy fields overseas. We have tried, and failed, to get all the drug dealers—big-time, small-time, and in between—put away. And clearly, the reason for these failures is that the processing and distribution of illegal narcotics and hallucinogens are enterprises so profitable to those in-

volved that they are worth the great risks they impose.

If none of this is new, neither is another element of Ehrenreich's argument, which can be summed up as *tu quoque*—or, you're another. This very charge has been leveled on behalf of drug users ever since the famously stoned "kids" of the 1960's first accused their martini-drinking parents of hypocrisy. Still, it must be admitted that adding NutraSweet, chocolate mousse, and buying dresses to the list of bourgeois infractions is intriguing, as is Ehrenreich's rather surprisingly uneducated impression that people in this health-conscious time are still drinking a lot of martinis. And it also must be admitted that she has managed to add a new fillip to the familiar charge of hypocrisy—the notion that we prohibit drugs because to do so makes us feel high, as if we were downing a cocktail of liquor and amphetamines.

YET like many critics of one or another form of strict legal sanction, Ehrenreich does not seem to understand that society metes out its punishments not only to avenge itself against wrongdoers but to confirm the law-abiders. She is flippant about the "wrong message" that opponents say would be sent by legalization. But it *is* important to teach the young that there is virtue and benefit in living within the limits set by one's community. The opposite (wrong) message is not only harmful—communicating to the young souls Ehrenreich claims to be worrying about that society actually does not give a damn what they do—it is also a lie.

So society struggles along—just as Ehrenreich urges, though in a different sense, "one day at a time"—with no notable success where drugs are concerned, but in the hope that if we cannot stop the supply, we might at least begin to reduce the demand. And no one anywhere has a single moment of feeling good about any of it.

No one, that is, except, oddly, Barbara Ehrenreich herself. In addition to affording herself the keen pleasure of arguing her position mainly by deconstructing the moral character of those who disagree with her, she indulges herself in sniffing a most reliably soothing old Democratic Socialist panacea: money. (There is no faith in the power of money more abiding than that held by socialists.)

This explains why she makes such a great point of telling us that the billions spent on law enforcement to deal with the drug problem represent a siphoning off of resources from schools and drug treatment and prevention—quite as if over the years many, many billions had not been spent, and are not now being spent, on schools, with, to put it mildly, small effect, and quite as if she or anyone else knows how to cure addiction in the absence of a moral decision by the addict himself.

Surely even Barbara Ehrenreich must realize by now, deep down, that the problem is not money, just as she must know that the boys and girls who are today killing themselves with crack are not doing so because the government is withholding its resources from them. Nevertheless, the smell of public money is out there and she sniffs on. Talk about addiction.

Books in Review

The World Stage

DIPLOMACY. By HENRY KISSINGER.
Simon & Schuster. 912 pp.
\$35.00.

Reviewed by PAUL JOHNSON

GOOD diplomats rarely write well about diplomacy. Ambassadorial memoirs include some of the worst books ever published. Castlereagh, Talleyrand, and Metternich, the three men who created the 1814-15 Vienna settlement, rightly praised by Henry Kissinger as one of the most durable works of peacemaking in history, left nothing apart from their voluminous papers, and for their views on their craft we are dependent on a few *bons mots*. By contrast, John Quincy Adams produced twelve volumes of *Memoirs*, and Chateaubriand's *Mémoires d'outre-tombe* is another Leviathan. But both are composed more of venom, spleen, hurt pride, and vindictive narrative than diplomatic adages—and, if truth be told, neither man was a negotiator of world class. In modern times, the writings of John Foster Dulles and Anthony Eden are unilluminating, George Kennan's books uneven, and the one outstanding memoir is Dean Acheson's *Present at the Creation*. But even that tells you what, where, and when, rather than how.

That leaves us with two authors—Harold Nicolson and Henry Kissinger. Both engaged in diplomacy with a passion for the art and with a view to writing about it later. Both studied carefully that perennial sourcebook of diplomacy, the Vienna Congress: Nicolson's *The Congress of Vienna* (1946) and Kissinger's *A World Restored* (1957) are the two best short accounts of it. Nicolson was brought up to the job. His father was head of

the Foreign Office and as a lad he personally delivered the British ultimatum to the German ambassador in July 1914; later he served under the last of the old-world Foreign Ministers, the Marquess Curzon. His writings on diplomacy are notable for their clarity and sense.

Kissinger, by contrast, came to diplomacy via academia and had to teach himself the silken ropes. Unlike Nicolson, however, he went right to the top where he acquired experience unique in his generation. He well knows how it feels to make lonely decisions. As Secretary of State, he also invented his own grandee diplomatic style, rather in the manner of the old cardinals like Wolsey or Richelieu. He had more aides than Richelieu had *monsignori*, and where Curzon took a private train, Kissinger had his circus pile into two or three big jets. Even Richard Nixon, no slouch when it came to display, once complained to me of the size of Kissinger's traveling entourage. But all this was deliberate. No man living, and few dead, have thought more carefully about the externals, the *impedimenta*, of negotiating.

Now, having already produced his two gigantic volumes of memoirs—and very good value they are—he has delivered himself of a scarcely less formidable study of diplomatic history and practice. The book's structure is complex. He begins by stating the fundamental dilemma of American foreign policy: the conflict between its instinctive idealism and its acquired respect for the realities of the world. In his next chapter he illustrates this by contrasting the two titans of the first decades of the century: Theodore Roosevelt, unashamed advocate of *Realpolitik*, and Woodrow Wilson, obstinate and tragic exponent of American idealism. It is Kissinger's contention that, with certain qualifications, Wilsonian idealism has triumphed in the 20th century as America, the strongest power, has committed itself, and persuaded others to commit themselves, to a

world order based upon the United Nations Charter.

HOWEVER, to say all that does not make a big book, and Kissinger is determined to provide one. So we go on a long historical tour, in which the author gives himself the pleasure of recounting, and pondering upon, the great diplomatic moments of the past. First he examines, in turn, efforts by Richelieu, William of Orange, and Pitt the Younger to conduct foreign and war policies based upon the concept of the balance of power. Then he takes another look at the Congress of Vienna: the notion of the neatly balanced major powers acting in concert to preserve civilized, undemocratic order. Next he has a look at "two revolutionaries"—Napoleon III and Bismarck: the one an overambitious buffoon running a fragile nation which broke in his hands, the other a "genius" in the business of matching aims to power—"Few statesmen have so altered the course of history."

Kissinger now turns to the decades leading up to World War I, showing how the balance of power in Europe turned dangerously rigid and how, in consequence, the powers constructed competing military alliances which in conjunction became what he calls a "doomsday machine." The implication here is that if Bismarck, or someone like him, had continued to run Germany, the war would have been avoided.

Kissinger has now reached the time of Wilson, and we have two chapters on the Treaty of Versailles, followed by one on the recovery of Germany. Then he shows how Hitler, a "demonic personality," brought about "the collapse of the house of cards which represented the Versailles international order." There follow two chapters leading up to the Nazi-Soviet pact and the opening of World War II.

At this point, Kissinger reintroduces America to the world stage, concentrating first on Franklin D. Roosevelt's "role in moving his iso-

PAUL JOHNSON, who writes a weekly column for the *London Spectator*, is the author of, among other books, *Modern Times*, *The Birth of the Modern*, and *Intellectuals*.

lationalist people toward participation in the war," which he thinks "serves as an object lesson on the scope of leadership in a democracy." He has an interesting chapter showing the three contrasting approaches to peace of FDR, Churchill, and Stalin; after this comes one demonstrating the inevitability, given Stalin's aims, of the cold war. He then takes us through the last half-century: containment, its successes and limitations; the Korean war; the postwar German problem; the Suez crisis; the Hungarian revolt; Berlin; and three poignant chapters on the tragedy of Vietnam. The historical section concludes with chapters on Nixon's foreign policy, *détente*, and the end of the cold war.

IN SUMMARIZING the bulk of Kissinger's book, I am anxious to demonstrate two points: first, the range of his historical interests; and second, the ingenuity with which all these different episodes are tied into his central theme of showing how men of good will, the heroes of history, have sought to contain the demons or fools by mixtures of *Realpolitik* and idealism.

Kissinger is a born teacher and carries the reader willingly along on his bumpy ride through four centuries of complex war- and peace-making. He has an eye for color, incident, and character; he summarizes well; and he keeps a neat balance between narrative and reflective analysis. He has read widely and intelligently, and I found myself both learning a lot and stimulated into reexamining some well-known historical turning points. For those who have the leisure, the entire book is very much worth reading.

But to get the gist of Kissinger's thinking on diplomacy one only has to read the first two and the last two chapters. The final one, "The New World Order Reconsidered," is particularly valuable. Kissinger's deepest diplomatic instincts are those of a civilized European. He regards the Vienna settlement, which endured for a century, as the most successful in European history because "it combined legitimacy and equilib-

rium, shared values, and balance-of-power diplomacy." At the same time, as an American guru, he recognizes that the idealist goal of a stable world order based on liberalism and democracy has to be the guiding principle of United States policy. His job, then, as he sees it, is to chart the pitfalls in pursuing this goal, and to show how they can be circumvented.

Thus his final chapter is a checklist of warnings. In general: "The domination by a single power of either of Eurasia's two principal spheres—Europe or Asia—remains a good definition of strategic danger for America, cold war or no cold war." On Russia: America should encourage that country "to concentrate—for the first time in her history—on the development of her national territory, which, extending over eleven time zones, from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok, gives no cause for claustrophobia." On Western Europe: recognition that "Both the Atlantic Alliance and the European Union are indispensable building-blocks of a new and stable world order." Eastern Europe: tie the ex-Communist states into NATO by a wider grouping, and then, "If Russia remains within its borders, the focus on security would shift over time. . . ." On China: play down violations of human rights and emphasize, instead, "tacit cooperation on global—and especially Asian—strategy." On Japan: prevent its arming dangerously, and so frightening China, by maintaining "a substantial American military presence in Northeast Asia." The Western Hemisphere: build on NAFTA through GATT.

All this advice is reasonable, and there is much more to the same effect. Kissinger is always worth listening to, and a sensible man in the White House will make a habit of consulting this remarkable man.

But is there a sensible man in the White House—or, for that matter, in Foggy Bottom? What the world needs today is not great guidance in sorting out its problems but effective leadership in applying that guidance. British, French, German, American—and now Russian—dabbling in the Balkans has been a depressing ex-

ercise in ineptitude punctuated by braggadocio, cowardice, stupidity, and futile point-scoring. So far only the Russians have emerged with any marks for diplomatic cunning. It makes one shudder at what would happen if the West were confronted by a real crisis.

Wisdom of the kind Kissinger imparts in this book is valuable—and I hope President Clinton will find the time to read it—but it is not enough by itself. Until we find a new generation of heavyweights to replace Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, the post-cold-war world will continue to drift alarmingly. For wisdom has to be translated into action by will.

Faith & Fantasy

THE NEW MIDDLE EAST. By SHIMON PERES. Holt. 224 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by RAELE JEAN ISAAC

ELISE BOULDING, a mother-figure in the 1960's peace movement in the United States, used to urge her followers to "Imagine Peace." The idea was that if you imagined hard enough, and in enough detail, the image would become reality. This book by Shimon Peres, Foreign Minister of Israel and chief architect of the peace agreement with Yasir Arafat, is based precisely on such an exercise; having "imagined" a political paradise, Peres proceeds to confuse it with reality.

The book is a blueprint for a reconstructed, democratic Middle East. After introductory sections on the secret negotiations with the PLO—Peres says he embarked on them when it became clear that the PLO controlled the Palestinian delegation to the talks begun at the Madrid conference over two years ago—and on the history of the Arab-Israeli conflict, he sets forth his vision of the future. He foresees a new regional superstructure, providing security and eco-

RAELE JEAN ISAAC contributed "The Real Lessons of Camp David" to our December 1993 issue. Her books include *Israel Divided*, *Parties and Politics of Israel*, and *Madness in the Streets (which she co-authored with Virginia Armat)*.

conomic prosperity "for all people and all nations of the Middle East." To this end, there are chapters on "Sources of Investment and Funding" (Peres wants Europe, the U.S., and Japan to make "large-scale, concentrated" investments); on agriculture (the Middle East will "change color from brown to green"); on water (canals, pipelines, and containers will provide a regional system); on transportation (railroads, free ports, an Israeli-Jordanian Red Sea-Dead Sea Canal); and on tourism (open borders will foster a huge increase of visitors).

The book concludes with Peres's political solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict: a confederation of Jordan and Palestine for political matters and "a Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli 'Benelux' arrangement for economic affairs." The problem of the Arab refugees will be solved within the confederation's framework.

It is a very pretty picture, as pictures go. The trouble is that, much of the time, Peres treats the new Middle East as if it were already here, or mostly here, or at least visible to the initiated. Thus, he writes of the need for leaders able to see "the new, burgeoning reality." "Fate," he writes, "has now brought us from a world of territorial conflict to one of economic challenge. . . . The Middle East is now a winner." And: "The transition from the economy of strife to an economy of peace has set the stage for the Middle East."

All this is based on what are, to put it mildly, highly questionable assumptions about what is going on in the wider world. As Peres sees it, with the end of the cold war, nationalism is fading; economic competition has replaced military and political conflict; missile technology has made the old need for strategic depth irrelevant; deterrence is an "outdated concept"; and the information revolution has turned the conquest of territory into a useless enterprise. Yet the list of nations and movements to whom all this would come as rather surprising news begins with Kuwait and stretches as far as the mind can reach.

With regard to the conflict in the Middle East, missing from this book is any sense either of Jewish national rights or of what the Arabs believe and want for themselves. Unlike earlier Zionist Labor leaders, Peres seems to have no conception of Jewish claims to the Land of Israel. In 1967, following the Six-Day War, Moshe Dayan could speak of returning "to the cradle of our people, to the inheritance of the Patriarchs, the land of the Judges. . . ." For Peres, by contrast, "the West Bank" is simply 30-50 kilometers of strategic depth which, to his mind, has no value because missiles can pass over it. He disposes of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria with a patent absurdity: "Just as Arab settlements could live under a rule that was not Arab, so also Jewish settlements could live under a rule that was not Israeli."

If Jewish rights go unacknowledged in this book, even as something that might have to be painfully sacrificed, equally unacknowl-

edged is the fact that the Arabs are independent actors with their own attitudes and values. Peres subscribes to a vulgar Marxism which essentially assumes the Arabs can be "bought" by means of greater prosperity. He paints the prospect of Israeli know-how making Arab deserts bloom, in rhetoric painfully reminiscent of the 1950's when Abba Eban, then Israel's Foreign Minister, regularly infuriated the Arabs with similar visions. To the Arabs, what Israel fondly conceived of as economic cooperation seemed instead a particularly insidious form of imperialism. And so, to many Arabs, it still seems today.

Which brings us to the issue of Muslim fundamentalism. Peres recognizes this as a threat to the "prosperity, honor, and plenty" he envisions, but argues that poverty is the "father of fundamentalism," and money will make it go away. He ought to take a long hard look at Egypt, where the \$20 billion the U.S. has supplied since the treaty

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with Israel has had no visible effect either on poverty or on the growth of Islamic fundamentalism; or, for that matter, at (non-Arab) Iran, comparatively wealthy and insulated from the Arab-Israeli conflict, where fundamentalism has had its most stunning success.

BUT what is perhaps the largest missing element in this book is the Arab-Israeli conflict as anything other than a local struggle between Jews and Palestinians. Peres writes: "It was clear to me that at the heart of this wearying, 100-year-old conflict—a conflict exacerbated by the establishment of the State of Israel 45 years ago—stood the Palestinian issue." In Peres's view, "Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan—and even Iraq, which has no common border with Israel—declared war on us because of the Palestinian issue. These were the only real grounds for our terrible wars."

This is astonishing stuff. The "Palestinian issue" the center of the conflict for 100 years? In 1946, Philip Hitti, probably the most famous modern historian of the Arabs, testified before the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry: "Sir, there is no such thing as Palestine in history, absolutely not." In 1947, protesting the UN partition plan, Arab representatives asserted in a formal document presented to the General Assembly that Palestine was part of Syria and "politically, the Arabs of Palestine [were] not independent in the sense of forming a separate political entity."

This can hardly be news to Peres. Indeed, elsewhere in the book he himself points out that Palestinian identity dates back no farther than 1967. But pretending that the Palestinians are at the core of a "100-year conflict" helps to obscure the historic refusal of most of the Arab world to accept an independent Jewish state in, as the Arabs like to put it, "the heart of the Arab homeland." Of course, to acknowledge that fact would mean confronting the real possibility that the enterprise Peres is engaged in might well result in a truncated and more vulnerable Israel that will invite further Arab aggression. In any event, so com-

mitted is Peres to his revisionist notions that, even in writing about the past, he now speaks of an "alleged" Arab desire to push Israel into the sea. For the sake of the new era, even historically verifiable aggression is no longer real to Peres.

In all these ways, Peres's exercise in imagining a "new Middle East" ultimately represents a failure of—imagination. He cannot imagine Arabs motivated by anything but a desire to improve their economic condition. He cannot imagine political currents in the Arab world independent of Israel and not subject to Israel's influence. He cannot imagine Islamic fundamentalism feeding on anything beyond "poverty" and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Most importantly, Peres cannot imagine that PLO leaders may have targets different from those of the Israelis with whom they negotiate. Thus, he declares that *his* method is to "start by defining the ultimate goal and then work backward, establishing interim goals and allocating the proper tools to reach them." It evidently does not occur to him that the PLO may be engaged in the same enterprise but with a different ultimate goal. For example: on the very day of the ceremony on the White House lawn last September, Arafat said on Jordanian TV that in signing the Declaration of Principles he was carrying out the "phased plan" endorsed by the PLO in 1974. That plan calls for obtaining whatever territory can be wrested from Israel as an interim step, and using it as a base to liberate all of "Palestine." Peres, significantly, never so much as mentions the "phased plan."

IN THIS book, Shimon Peres advocates tossing away the strategy of deterrence on which Israel has historically relied in favor of a dream. More than that, he shows us that Israel has already embarked on such a policy, one based on "fewer weapons and more faith"—faith, that is, in Yasir Arafat.

And how has that faith been rewarded? Peres himself writes that in Oslo, Israel "got concessions without which we would never have

been able to sign an agreement." The most important, he says, was "that the PLO nullify the 33 articles of the Palestinian Covenant, which call for . . . the destruction of Israel." But the Covenant has not been nullified; nor has the PLO ceased employing terrorism, let alone, to cite another "concession" mentioned by Peres, engaged in a "fight against terror and terrorism."

It may seem mind-boggling that an embattled country could stake its future on such flimsy fantasies. Yet as Hirsh Goodman, the dovish editor of the *Jerusalem Report*, and by his own account an enthusiastic supporter of the pact with Arafat, recently discovered, such is indeed the case. Goodman reports on a conversation he held with what he describes as "four architects of the [peace] process," in which it emerged that they had worked out none of the important issues and did not have "the slightest idea of where [they] are heading or why." Goodman writes: "I left utterly confused and dejected, fearful that we are marching along an unplanned, ill-conceived path that will only exacerbate the status quo."

Peres's *The New Middle East* does nothing to dispel and much to confirm this diagnosis. And it inadvertently holds out the even more alarming prospect of an Israeli territorial retreat that will be met not by Peres's fantasy of large-scale democratization and cooperation but by the all too familiar Middle Eastern reality of renewed conflict and aggression.

The Path of Consciousness

THE ASTONISHING HYPOTHESIS:
THE SCIENTIFIC SEARCH FOR
THE SOUL. By FRANCIS CRICK.
Scribner's. 317 pp. \$25.00.

Reviewed by JEFFREY MARSH

SOME 40 years ago, in a Nobel Prize-winning feat, Francis Crick and James Watson unraveled the structure of DNA, showing how

Jeffrey Marsh, whose article, "Physics vs. Metaphysics," appeared in our November 1993 issue, is president of Marsh Communications.

the genetic information which controls the biological nature of all living creatures is stored in a molecule with the shape of a double helix. Unburdened by false modesty, Crick proclaimed in a Cambridge pub: "We have discovered the secret of life!"

Since then, Crick's ambition has not waned. Now in his late seventies, having moved from Cambridge to California and changed his focus from biochemistry to brain research, he believes that the time is ripe for a rigorous exploration of the phenomenon of consciousness—or, as he puts it, a scientific understanding of the human soul.

In his new book, Crick proposes what he calls an "Astonishing Hypothesis." Saving the reader undue suspense, he states it in the first paragraph of his introduction:

You, your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.

If this hypothesis is correct, Crick goes on, it follows

that the idea that man has a disembodied soul is unnecessary . . . in head-on contradiction to the religious beliefs of billions of human beings alive today.

A question immediately pops into mind: in a world full of atheists, agnostics, and diehard skeptics, what is so astonishing about this hypothesis? And in fact Crick agrees that many people today ("including a large number in the former Communist countries") do dismiss the idea of a nonmaterial and perhaps immortal soul. Yet, he argues, despite paying lip-service to a materialistic explanation of the mystery of human existence, few people really accept it in their hearts. Almost all of us still think of ourselves as having an essential core different from the sum total of the activity of all our nerve cells (neurons). We feel the presence of an internal "I"—a virtual miniature man or homunculus sitting inside ourselves—that observes the external world, tries to make sense of it, and embodies

the free will that decides how we should act.

It is *that* intuitive feeling, says Crick, which is an illusion, generated by the immensely complex nature of the brain and nervous system. Although we are far from understanding enough about the workings of that system to explain the phenomenon of consciousness, Crick believes it is time for a concerted scientific attack on the problem. In this book he summarizes what is known today about the workings of the brain, describes the methods used by researchers to learn more, suggests further questions for investigation, and theorizes about the purpose of consciousness and how it arises.

CRICK believes fervently that the only reliable source of knowledge is scientific investigation, a method of solving complex problems by breaking them down into a set of simpler questions, answerable in terms that can be tested experimentally. As an extremely successful practitioner of this methodology, he suggests that the scientific investigation of consciousness should begin with a detailed study of vision, which lends itself more easily to experimentation in both humans and animals than does speech (even though it is precisely verbal ability that most distinctly separates man from beast and enables him to express his consciousness).

What, then, do we know about the visual system in mammals? Both a great deal and very little. As Crick points out, the structure and functioning of the eye, the molecular biology and chemistry of individual optic nerve cells, and the psychological mechanisms that help us decide what to look at and how to interpret the often ambiguous messages we receive from the outside world have all been explored. But even with this mass of knowledge, we really have no idea how the visual system manages to extract order from the incredible number of individual pieces of visual data that bombard it every second.

As with the eye in particular, so with the brain in general. One of the great virtues of this book is the

very full account Crick provides of the ingenious techniques scientists have developed to overcome some of the incredible difficulties involved in studying the brain, a compact mass that contains half the neurons in the human body. To try to make sense of the way these tens of billions of cells act, both individually and collectively, researchers use instruments ranging from massive CAT, PET, and MRI scanners that look at the whole brain or local areas within it to fine glass electrodes sensitive enough to detect chemical and electrical activity in a single neuron (with a diameter less than one-thousandth of an inch). They study the effects of different stimuli on normal brains in animals and humans, both sleeping and awake, and on damaged brains. Some scientists study the properties of slices of brain tissue growing in dishes, while others study optical illusions in order to make inferences about the way the brain connects raw inputs to final perceptions.

Generally speaking, much more is known about what happens at the beginning and end of the process—the input of raw sensory data and the conclusions our brain gives us—than about the complex chain of internal events in-between. As Crick would put it, we have no neurons whose firing tells us what is going on in the brain. The scientific description he seeks is thus precisely one that will specify the "neural correlates" of mental activity—the actual physical and biochemical processes that produce our thoughts.

WHILE waiting for that breakthrough, Crick brings together here the knowledge contributed by psychology and physiology, biochemistry, electrical engineering, and recent advances in computer science (in particular, so-called neural networks) to construct his own model of consciousness. He explains it, in brief, as a consequence of "reverberatory activity" between different parts of the brain—the thalamus and the cortex—which serves as a kind of short-term memory, taking the output of large numbers of neurons, assembling a mass of raw data and

making it into one package of usable information.

In a short postscript, Crick also expounds his theory that the brain contains an assembly of neurons devoted to making plans for future action; this assembly obeys computational rules "wired into" the brain by a combination of genetics and experience. Because we are not consciously aware of these rules, but only of the action-oriented outcomes they generate, and because some of them are extremely sensitive to small changes in their inputs, the decisions we make appear unpredictable, which is why we *think* we have free will. Basing himself on studies of a brain-damaged woman who was able to observe her surroundings and understand conversations, but unable to form responses, Crick opines with startling specificity that "Free Will [his capitals] is located near the anterior cingulate sulcus."

And what of the soul? Some 256 pages after mentioning it in his introduction, Crick returns at the end to acknowledge that many readers "might justifiably complain that what has been discussed . . . has little to do with the human soul as they understand it." Yet all such criticisms, he admonishes, though "perfectly valid at the moment, . . . show a lack of appreciation of the methods of science." Once the working of the visual system is fully understood, science will go on until it is eventually able "to explain *all* aspects of the behavior of our brains, including those of musicians, mystics, and mathematicians . . . perhaps some time during the 21st century." For those who still remain unconvinced—who still find something inexplicable about man and his soul—they are captives of a view "predetermined by a slavish adherence to religious dogma."

AND how would they have come by such a view? Crick has an answer for that, too. Man simply cannot be anything more than the product of a random evolutionary process, edited by the pressures of natural selection. Thus, if we *seem* to behave and think in a way very different from the rest of creation,

that must also be a consequence of Darwinian mechanisms. Even our religious beliefs are explicable in such terms:

It should always be remembered that our brains largely developed during the period when humans were hunter-gatherers . . . [with] strong selective pressure for cooperation within small groups. . . . A shared set of overall beliefs strengthens the bond between tribal members.

As long as people accept such shared beliefs, says Crick, they need not even be true. Precisely because "our brains evolved to guess the most plausible interpretation of the limited evidence available," humans have an "almost limitless capacity for self-deception." This, indeed, is why we need scientific research, for otherwise "we shall often jump to wrong conclusions, especially about rather abstract matters."

Quite apart from their breath-taking condescension, what these lines neatly ignore is that there are, after all, many abstract questions which scientific research, no matter how disciplined, cannot answer, including some of particular importance to human beings. A major problem for evolutionary theory, for example, is how and why *homo sapiens* should have developed a propensity to pose abstract mathematical questions having nothing to do with the everyday observable world but leading nevertheless to the revelation of hidden truths about the way the whole universe works. Similarly, the human concern for moral questions leads to even deeper propositions about the nature and purpose of the universe, propositions that stand in sharp contrast to the idea of a random, amoral, Darwinian world.

Crick is correct to suggest that scientists are unlikely to discover the human soul, but not for the reasons he states. They are like expert mechanics who can disassemble every part of an automobile, explain how it works, and perhaps even repair it. Those activities are all very valuable to the car owner, but they cannot help him decide where he should drive, or why.

The Fifty-Five Years War

IN EUROPE'S NAME: GERMANY AND THE DIVIDED CONTINENT. By TIMOTHY GARTON ASH. Random House. 680 pp. \$27.50.

Reviewed by GEORGE WEIGEL

TIMOTHY GARTON ASH is best known to American readers as the British journalist whose front-line reports on the personalities and events that gave birth to the Revolution of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe were the finest materials on the subject available in English. Those who delighted in Garton Ash's previous work may be in for something of a shock, though, when they start their way through *In Europe's Name*. For here we meet Garton Ash the Oxford don and fellow of St. Antony's College; and if the writing continues to be mellifluous, the pace, the cautious probity of the analysis, and the seemingly unbridled passion for academic detail (*In Europe's Name* contains 240 pages of scholarly apparatus) make for a very different kind of read.

But then so, too, does the subject matter. For in painstakingly dissecting the ends, means, accomplishments, and failures of West German policy toward the old Soviet bloc (*Ostpolitik*), Garton Ash has left the world of easily identifiable Good Guys and Bad Guys—the setting for his previous works on Solidarity and on the human-rights movements in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and the late East Germany—and entered the far murkier, chiaroscuro world of diplomacy during the last twenty years or so of the cold war. If the resulting historical autopsy is not so edifying as Garton Ash's earlier evocations of the anti-Communist resistance in *Mittleuropa*, it is nonetheless fascinating for what it suggests not only about the past, but about the future of Germany and "Europe."

GEORGE WEIGEL is the president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center in Washington, D.C. His ninth book, *Idealism Without Illusions: U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1990's*, is being published this month.

In Europe's Name also brings a refreshing—indeed, at times, almost relentless—ecumenism of political outlook to the debate about the material and efficient causes of the Communist crack-up. Garton Ash has described his book as an attempt to challenge the “terrible simplifications” that have skewed commentary on the how and the why of Communism’s fall. No doubt some of those simplifications continue to befog our vision of the recent past; one thinks in particular of the Gorbophilia and Reaganophobia that still dominate the American academy and prestige press. Yet Garton Ash’s call to a wiser complexity cuts both ways ideologically: both unrepentant cold warriors and unrepentant détenteists will find things to cheer and things to deplore in his explication of the materials he has assembled. Still, on the evidence of *In Europe's Name*, it would seem that it is the advocates of appeasing Soviet power, on both sides of the Atlantic, who should have the most to regret when the score sheets are tallied up at the end of the day.

According to Garton Ash, the *Ostpolitik* of the old Federal Re-

public of Germany unfolded in three intersecting circles: relations with the Soviet Union; with the oxymoronically-styled German Democratic Republic (DDR); and with the other states of the Yalta imperial system in Central and Eastern Europe. It is the first of these, with the Soviet Union, that he judges to be the greatest success in terms of the goals that German *Ostpolitik* set for itself.

The task and the stakes were large indeed. For what *Ostpolitik* sought on this front was nothing less than a reversal of the traditional Russian fear of German power in Central Europe. Moreover, “normalization” with the Soviet Union had to be pursued without alienating West Germany’s principal ally, the United States. Thus, the “crucial trick” of *Ostpolitik*, as Garton Ash once put it elsewhere, was to “woo and win the confidence of Moscow without losing the confidence of Washington.”

And here the West Germans were successful. Over a period of twenty years, Soviet perceptions of the Federal Republic changed dramatically. The country thought as

late as 1970 to be the gravest threat to the Soviet position in Europe came to be regarded by Kremlin leaders, in the last moments of the Soviet state, as their chief potential European partner.

Garton Ash recognizes that this striking Soviet turn toward amiability was not West Germany’s accomplishment alone; it was also, and deeply, influenced by the events of the 1980’s throughout the Warsaw Pact, and by the revitalization of the Western policy of containment as embodied in the NATO deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles in Western Europe and the threat of SDI. But he still insists that the West Germans are to be given full credit here, at least in their own diplomatic frame of reference: they got what they wanted, the way they wanted to get it.

THIS was emphatically not the case, however, in the second circle of *Ostpolitik*: relations with East Germany. Here, success—i.e., reunification—was achieved by means quite different from those anticipated by Willy Brandt, Walter Scheel, Egon Bahr, Helmut Schmidt,



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Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Helmut Kohl, and the other architects of *Ostpolitik*.

Indeed, *Ostpolitik*'s impact on East Germany is a classic example of the law of unintended consequences working itself out in history. For according to Garton Ash's analysis (based in part on newly available East German party archives and state-security papers), the East German Communist regime successfully manipulated the economic blandishments and diplomatic status afforded it by its cousins in the *Bundesrepublik* for its own totalitarian purposes, only to find itself trumped, in the end, by forces whose emergence neither East nor West German leaders anticipated.

Thus, West Germany set out to stabilize East Germany, from which baseline (it was thought) the liberalization of the East German regime might be pursued; in other words, the democratic West Germans would facilitate the reform of Communism from above in East Germany. But in fact what happened was stabilization without liberalization. West German *Ostpolitik* did not bring a new generation of reforming East Germans to the fore; rather, what got stabilized was the neo-Stalinist regime of Erich Honecker.

The supreme irony here, though, is that the Honecker regime crumbled all the more rapidly and comprehensively in 1989 than it might have done if a Hungarian-style reform Communism had been at the throttle throughout the 1980's; Honecker's successful stabilization set the conditions for rapid implosion when other, outside factors changed the game. And yet the finger of irony points at Bonn as well as at East Berlin. For if West Germany's policy of stabilization contributed to the collapse of the DDR by fueling the *hubris* of the Honecker gerontocracy, then West Germany ended up getting it right (effecting the reunification of Germany) by getting it wrong (appeasing the likes of Erich Honecker).

FINALLY, relations with the nations east of East Germany and west of the Soviet Union: these were al-

ways, and deliberately, on the back diplomatic burner. And here, Garton Ash argues, the West Germans were at their least impressive, and contributed virtually nothing to the collapse of Communism in East Central Europe.

West German openness to the "human-contacts" dimension of the Helsinki accords resulted in millions of Central and East Europeans visiting the Federal Republic and seeing, with their own eyes, the superiority of democratic capitalism. That, plus the deliberate effort to defang the German bogey in the minds of Central and East Europeans (as well as Russians), indirectly influenced the Revolution of 1989, Garton Ash suggests. But the West Germans played no direct role in shaping the human-rights resistance that brought down Communism from within in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the DDR, and that influenced the "goulash Communism" which evolved in Hungary prior to that country's democratization.

In fact, West German hesitancy about "destabilizing" the Soviets' Warsaw Pact satellites, which at times spilled over into active criticism of the anti-Communist resistance—some German statesmen actually welcomed the imposition of martial law in Poland in December 1981 as a contribution to stability and détente—was the expression of two serious misjudgments, one moral and the other political.

The moral misjudgment is the more obvious: to defend, even if tacitly, the actions of a Polish state that had declared war on Polish society, or to make excuses for the people who were shuttling Vaclav Havel and his colleagues in and out of jail, was odious in itself. To be sure, given the unnatural division of the country and the consequent reality of millions of hostages in the DDR, West Germany could not take the lead; but it could have recognized more fully the contributions that American, British, and French public diplomacy made to the common cause in supporting Solidarity, Charter 77, and other resistance groups in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Instead, the West Germans com-

pounded their moral misjudgment by criticizing that support in what can only be described as a patronizing and supercilious way.

Then there was the strategic-historical-political misjudgment. West German *Ostpolitik* was based on a "top-down" strategy of change: whether the issue was the Soviet Union, East Germany, or the other Soviet satellites, the key to reversing Yalta, it was thought, was to promote reform Communism. Stabilization would lead to liberalization, and liberalization would lead, eventually, to convergence with the West and the erasure of Yalta's artificial division of the continent. This, interestingly (and perhaps not accidentally), was similar to the policy engaged in by the Vatican during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI.

Both German and early Vatican *Ostpolitik* seemed to assume, on the one hand, that Communist regimes could be successfully self-reforming and self-transforming, and, on the other hand, that Western Europe and the United States lacked the staying power to see the cold war through to a victorious conclusion. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher (with occasional help from François Mitterrand, Helmut Schmidt, and Helmut Kohl) put paid to the second proposition; the first was implausible from the outset.

The very least that can be said is that West German policy toward the "captive nations" of East Central Europe combined a minimum of moral fiber with a paucity of strategic sagacity: a disheartening combination, indeed, and one that, continued into the changed circumstances of today, does not bode well for the future of German diplomacy. In fact, in late 1992 the Foreign Minister of a now-unified Germany, Klaus Kinkel, visited Beijing in order to promote a "long-overdue normalization" with the People's Republic of China. This, as Garton Ash puts it, suggests that "like the Bourbons, the German Foreign Ministry [has] forgotten nothing and learned nothing."

GARTON ASH concludes his study by suggesting that it was the "un-

intended combination" of two forms of détente, the German and the American (of the Reagan variety), that produced the desired result: and this despite the fact that the exponents of these two approaches were not infrequently critical (to put it gently) of each other's positions. Thus, rearmament and arms control, economic sanctions and economic carrots, human contacts and the public diplomacy of human rights were all responsible, in their various ways, for bringing a decisive, if subsequently difficult and tempestuous, victory to the forces of freedom in the Fifty-Five Years War against totalitarianism.

There is a lot to be said for such a judicious and balanced verdict. The Revolution of 1989 was a massive historical upheaval, and no single-cause explanation can possibly do justice to the myriad of forces that made it what it was. And yet, if one asks why the Revolution of 1989 happened *when* it did and *how* it did, then surely pride of place has to be given to those human-rights activists whose courageous resistance throughout the 1980's set the moral-cultural and political foundation on which the nonviolent overthrow of Communism in East Central Europe took place.

Yes, their cause was aided, and significantly, by a weakening of the Soviet Union—itsself a major accomplishment of the Reagan/Thatcher revitalization of containment. Yes, it made a difference that Mikhail Gorbachev, and not Yuri Andropov, was in control in the Kremlin. Yes, even before 1989, Bonn's wooing of Moscow had made possible Soviet contemplation of a post-Yalta order in Central Europe.

But in the cold light of dawn, it was those hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of individual conscientious decisions to say "No" to Communism—and to do so non-violently—that made the crucial difference. And it was the human-rights dimension of the Helsinki accords, which, as Garton Ash amply demonstrates, *Ostpolitik* did little if anything to support, that made the difference to the difference.

Confronting the "Isms"

ON LOOKING INTO THE ABYSS: UNTIMELY THOUGHTS ON CULTURE AND SOCIETY. By GERTRUDE HIMMELFARB. Knopf. 192 pp. \$23.00.

Reviewed by JOHN GROSS

THE historian Gertrude Himmelfarb's latest collection of essays displays all the virtues that readers have come to expect from her—lucid intelligence, wide-ranging scholarship, penetrating judgment. Good manners, too: she remains, as she has always been, a restrained and courteous controversialist. Yet one can also detect, however much it is kept under control, a new note of exasperation, even at times a hint of outright disgust.

Such sentiments are entirely in order, since almost all the essays deal with the disasters that have overtaken intellectual life in recent years. Three in particular tackle prevailing fashions head-on. The title essay, "On Looking Into the Abyss," considers deconstruction and related ailments, especially as they have affected literary criticism, philosophy, and the study of history. "Postmodernist History" is about just that. "Heroes, Villains, and Valets"—which originally appeared in COMMENTARY (June 1991)—sets in perspective contemporary attempts to undermine the idea that some books or ideas or events or personalities are more significant than others.

The "abyss" in the essay on deconstruction is the abyss of meaninglessness (or of surfeit of meaning, which comes to much the same thing). In the world of deconstruction, the interpreter takes precedence over the thing interpreted, and—not to put too fine a point upon it—any interpretation goes. The most obvious aim of such a creed is to weaken our hold on reality, chiefly by denying that there is any reality for us to get hold of; its most probable effect, if we were to take it seriously, would be to induce feelings of despair

JOHN GROSS's most recent book is *Shylock: A Legend and Its Legacy*.

and dread. But the abyss of the deconstructionists, as Miss Himmelfarb says, is a purely linguistic one. It offers us a soft landing; it positively invites us to start frisking around.

No feature of deconstruction is in fact more striking than its programmatic will to playfulness. Miss Himmelfarb quotes some memorable examples: the Yale critic Geoffrey Hartman praising deconstructionist critics as "clowns and jongleurs," Richard Rorty exhorting his fellow philosophers to "josh people out of the habit" of taking moral issues seriously. She might have added that in recent years "carnival" and "carnavalesque" have become particularly okay critical terms. Life is a cabaret, old chum—though not a very amusing one. In practice, the verbal wit of deconstructionists tends to be as elephantine as their slogans would lead one to expect, and there are times when the whole enterprise seems not much more than an excuse for making bad puns. (A random example: I open a well-produced journal of art history, emanating from a major university, and there is an article on homoerotic motifs in Alfred Hitchcock entitled "Anal Rope.")

Sometimes the joshing and jongling assume a more sinister aspect. Miss Himmelfarb also cites a description of the late literary critic Paul de Man, also of Yale, as "the only man who ever looked into the abyss and came away smiling." I must admit that I have a strong, possibly unworthy, desire to wipe that particular smile off that particular face. Not of course that there was any necessary link between de Man's later deconstructionist writings and the views he had once promulgated in a pro-Nazi newspaper in occupied Belgium in 1941 and 1942. But deconstruction does not seem to have been any kind of hindrance to his hushing-up of those views, and it certainly enabled his admirers to resort to the most ludicrous sophistries in his defense—tricks to make the angels weep.

TURNING from the deconstructionists to the postmodernists, Miss Himmelfarb notes that the histori-

ans among them are equally dedicated to the pleasure principle—to history, as she says, “at the pleasure of the historian.” They yearn to be considered creative and imaginative; casting off the chains of mere causal and chronological “narrativity,” they nonetheless tend to conceive of history as a form of fiction. Postmodernist fiction, to be sure: what one of them has called “a historiographic metafiction.”

As with the playfulness of the deconstructionists, there is a gulf here between the aspiration and (as far as I can judge) the mostly leaden results. But it is the theoretical stance that counts: that, and the rejection of established standards. Miss Himmelfarb is especially good on the contrast between the postmodernists and their modernist predecessors, between yesterday’s “relativistic” relativism and the “absolutistic” version that has succeeded it. The earlier modernists, like most good historians before them, were well aware that perfect objectivity is unobtainable; the difference is that they still thought objectivity was worth striving for, and that above all this entailed the critical sifting of evidence. In order to “demystify” such supposedly false history, postmodernism, in Miss Himmelfarb’s words, “has to expose not only its ideology—the hegemonic, privileged, patriarchal interests” that the old sort of history allegedly serves—but also its methodology, the scholarly apparatus that gives it a specious credibility.”

IT WILL be clear from the type of interests it sets out to unmask (and Miss Himmelfarb’s brief list is an accurate one) that postmodernism does not operate in a vacuum. For the most part it has a political agenda, or rather a choice of agendas—some of them in potential conflict with one another, but all of them radical. True, it also has its radical critics, neo-Marxists in particular; but even they have been known to feel the charm of its subversive implications.

And what of deconstruction? It, too, presents itself as a liberation movement, which means that the most important question we can

ask about it is: liberation for the sake of what? Often, no doubt, liberation as an end in itself, which is an attractive enough ideal until you have to start picking up the pieces. As Miss Himmelfarb remarks elsewhere in this collection, in an essay on John Stuart Mill, if absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely, so does absolute liberty.

But then absolute liberty is itself a form of power—the power to destroy without having to face the consequences. And one way or another it is on the power they confer that the various “isms” Miss Himmelfarb discusses seem to me to base their ultimate appeal. Often, it is true, it is no more than literary or academic power: the traditional exultation of the intellectual in his ability to “see through” things, to dislodge his predecessors, to know more about you than you know yourself. But let us hope that things remain at that level, that these particular ideas are not translated into action as they filter down through the media and the instruments of mass education.

THE presumption against greatness—the valet-like conception of history,” about which Miss Himmelfarb writes so well—can itself be seen as a move in the intellectual power game; and like other such moves, it is not without its ironies. A climate in which heroes are supposed to be cut down to size is also one in which leading campus pundits (if they are deemed to be sufficiently subversive) are accorded a star status that very few of their predecessors ever enjoyed.

Miss Himmelfarb introduces us to the term “BG”—“Big Guy”; she first heard it, as a variant on DWM or Dead White Male, from “the head of the women’s-studies program in a distinguished college,” who explained that the objectionable thing about the BG’s of the past was not only that they were Guys but also that they were Big, and hence “privileged.” I am not quite sure where this leaves Big Persons like Emily Dickinson or Madame Curie, but I am even more curious as to whether the objection to bigness, which plainly takes in Beethoven and Shakespeare, also extends to more re-

cent avatars like (shall we say?) the deconstructionists Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. I doubt it; in any case, there are certainly some feminists (Miss Himmelfarb quotes Joan Wallach Scott) who believe that Foucault and Derrida “can offer feminism a powerful analytic perspective.”

Postmodern often means post-Marxist as well, and Marx cuts a decidedly old-fashioned figure in the one essay in this book in which he bulks large. “From Marx to Hegel” takes its cue from Vaclav Havel’s observation that the lesson of recent history is that “Consciousness precedes Being”—as Hegel maintained—and not the other way round, as the Marxists claim.” Insofar as Miss Himmelfarb’s essay reads like an epitaph for Marx, it may be a bit optimistic: I am not yet convinced that we have really killed the snake, and that we may not have to go on scotching it. But Miss Himmelfarb makes some excellent points along the way—about Marx’s compulsion to present the proletariat in an unattractive light, for instance, even while speaking on its behalf and in its name.

By contrast, an essay on nationalism and religion is the one piece in the collection that feels skimpy: Miss Himmelfarb simply does not have enough space to do justice to an elaborate theme. Yet even here she manages to make an observation which ought to be familiar, but is not, and which is all the more valuable on that account:

It is one of the bitter ironies of history that now, when the newer nationalities are becoming more aggressive and brutal, the older ones are becoming more diffident and passive, reluctant to affirm the legitimacy of their own civic, pacific mode of nationalism, let alone to impugn the legitimacy of the despotic tribal mode that is now emerging.

A subtitle describes the essays that make up *On Looking Into the Abyss* as “Untimely Thoughts on Culture and Society.” They are untimely only in the sense that they resist and reject the fashions of the day; in every other sense they are as timely as they could be.

**First we
made gardens bloom
in the desert
and cities rise from
nothing.**

**Then we turned
our attention to suits.**

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Welcome to the next level of luxury. Lufthansa's four-engine Airbus A340. We're the first airline in the world to offer it to you. And that's not surprising. After all, Lufthansa has one of the newest fleets in the air. Inspired by your needs, our A340 engineers made hundreds of refinements to the aircraft's original design. So you can enjoy the features you requested most. Like a roomy cabin, with seats designed for maximum comfort. Each no more than one seat away from an aisle. In every class. Add to this our renowned international service, and you've got a travel experience that goes beyond your expectations.



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